

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS CHUKAS - 5757

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"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Chukas -

Why Not Speculate on The Reason for Para Adumah? In this week's Parsha we have the quintessential "chok," the law of the Red Heifer, whose reason is totally beyond our comprehension. The wise King Solomon said about this law "... I thought I would understand it (after penetrating analysis); but I see that it (grasp of its inner meaning) is far removed from me". [Koheles 7:23] It is the style of the Sefer HaChinuch (and indeed one of the major purposes of the work) to explain the reason behind each of the 613 commandments. In this week's Parsha, when he reaches the law of Para Adumah, he writes, "I am afraid to explain the reason for this command..." If King Solomon concluded that the command was beyond his comprehension, the author of the Sefer HaChinuch feels he has no right to attempt to offer an explanation of his own.

Rav Yakov Kaminetzky makes a very interesting point. We know very well that whenever we attempt to give a reason for a command, we are not offering THE definitive reason. We do not change practical halacha based on any reasons offered to explain a command. In other words, if we would say the reason for a certain Mitzvah is such and such, and if in a given set of circumstances this reason does not apply, we would not in any way, shape or form, change our practice of the Mitzvah. Ultimately, if the Torah says to do a Mitzvah, we do it regardless of the reason. This in fact, Rav Yakov says, is the point at issue in the Talmudic dispute of whether we expound on the reason behind a verse (darshinan ta'ama dikra) or not. Rav Shimon holds we do think about the reason behind a mitzvah (in defining its scope and parameters) and the Sages hold that we do not think about the reason behind a mitzvah. We rule like the Sages in this dispute. Even the Sages agree that it is permitted and advisable to try to understand the theory behind various commandments. The whole point at issue between them is whether we draw practical conclusions based on those reasons. For example the Torah tells us not to take (as a pledge of security on a loan) an article of clothing from a widow [Devarim 24:17]. Rav Shimon argues that the reason for this is that we can assume that the widow is poor and desperately needs this article of clothing. Since he holds "darshinan ta'ama dikra," he rules that in the case of a rich widow, that this law would not apply. [Sanhedrin 21a] We follow the Sages' opinion that even though we can speculate about the reason for a command, we will never change any practice based on the applicability or inapplicability of the apparent underlying reason for the command. Based on this, Rav Yakov can not understand why the Sefer HaChinuch would shy away from attempting to give an explanation for Para Adumah. Why not speculate about the reason? Practically, nothing will change, regardless of the explanation. What would the Sefer HaChinuch lose by trying to give us an insight into the reason for this Mitzvah?

Speculation on Reasons Would Undermine THE Reason for Para Aduma Rav Yakov answers that to do this would defeat the whole purpose of Para Aduma. The whole purpose of this Mitzvah is to educate us that we must keep the Mitzvos even though we DON'T understand them. Ultimately, all Mitzvos have to be 'Chukim.' When push comes to shove, we keep the Mitzvos for only one reason: Because G-d tells us to keep them. Whether we understand them or not, whether we think they make sense or not, is all academic. The Mitzvah of Parah Aduma is the paradigm (the Binyan Av) -- the classic case which tells us about all other mitzvos. Even though it makes no sense to us, and even though there is such an inherent paradox in the intricacies of its laws (e.g. -- it makes pure the impure and makes impure the pure), that itself is the whole point of the Mitzvah -- to teach us that we must keep the commandments, no matter what. Many of the Torah commentaries take note of the expression, "This is the Law of the Torah" (Zos Chukas HaTorah). They ask, would it not be more appropriate to begin "This is the Law of Impurity" (Zos Chukas HaTumah) or "This is the Law of Purity" (Zos Chukas HaTahara). Why the more general "Zos Chuakas HaTorah?" The answer is that this is precisely the point. We are dealing with a reflection on the essential nature of all the laws of the Torah. We have to be able and willing to do the Mitzvos, simply because G-d commands it, even though we may not understand. Therefore, Rav Yakov says that for the Sefer HaChinuch to delve into and speculate the reason behind Para Adumah, would be defeating its very purpose.

Rav Yosef Shaal Natanson has a different interpretation than all other commentaries, regarding the statement of our Sages that refers the previously quoted verse from Koheles to Para Aduma. Every one learns that in the expression "v'hi rechoka mimeni" (and It is distant from me) the word "v'hi" (and It) refers to the Para

Aduma. The Shoel U'Meishiv however interprets that the word "v'hi" refers to the entire Torah. He learns the interpretation as follows: After I saw that I could not comprehend the reason for Para Adumah, I saw that the reason of EVERYTHING IN THE TORAH was entirely beyond me. One may think he understands Torah, but Para Adumah shows him, to the contrary, that he does not.

"How Great Are the Words of Our Rabbis" The Vilna Gaon says a beautiful insight. The Mishnah states that on Friday night, a person should not read by candlelight [Shabbos 1:3]. In a subsequent Braisa in the Gemara, we find the reason for the Mishnaic prohibition "lest he come to tip the candle (to adjust the light emanating from the wick) and come to extinguish it." The Talmud says that when Rav Yishmael heard the reason of the Braita he said, "I can learn by the light of a candle Friday night and will be careful not to touch it." The Talmud then records an incident that Rav Yishmael read by the light of a candle Friday night. He forgot it was Shabbos. He began fooling around with the wick and extinguished the candle. He then concluded, "How great are the words of our Sages, who taught that one should not read by candle light" [Shabbos 12b]. The simple reading of this Gemara is that Rav Yishmael is saying, "How wise were the Rabbis to anticipate that someone might absent-mindedly extinguish a candle when reading by candlelight. I didn't think this would happen so I read by candlelight, and I came to sin." The Vilna Gaon, however, understands that when Rav Yishmael said, "How great are the words of our Sages, who taught that one should not read by candlelight," he is referring to the Mishnah. He was specifically praising the Rabbis of the Mishnah for making a blanket statement that one should not read by candlelight without giving a reason (as opposed to the Rabbis of the Braisa who did give a reason). He was praising the insight of the Rabbis who knew that one should not tell people not to do something BECAUSE... Once one says BECAUSE, half the battle is already lost. All the reasons in the world will emerge, why the 'BECAUSE' does not apply to specific people or specific cases. According to the Gaon, the reference (How great...) is to the language of the Mishnah, not to the decree itself. When reasons are given, the door to excuses is opened. This is the lesson of Para Adumah. "This is the Law of the Torah." It is a Law that relates not only to purity and impurity, and not only to the Para Aduma. This is what it means to be a Jew. Ultimately, I must keep the Torah whether I understand it or not.

Para Aduma Was Needed In Marah Rav Yakov concludes by quoting the teaching of our Rabbis that the Jewish people were commanded 10 laws at Marah, even prior to receiving the Torah on Mt. Sinai. One of the Mitzvos (according to some opinions) was Para Aduma. It is easy to understand G-d commanding Mitzvos such as Shabbos and respect for parents at Marah. These are such basic commands that they could not wait the seven weeks until Mt. Sinai and had to be given immediately at Marah. But why would they need Para Aduma in Marah? They didn't even have a Mishkan yet. One can not make a Para Aduma without the Ohel Moed. So why would Para Aduma need to be taught so prematurely? Rav Yakov explains, beautifully: Marah was the prelude to Kabbalas HaTorah. He gave them the Mitzvah of Para Aduma because this is what it is all about. Even though they could not yet physically make a Para Aduma, they had to have the concept of "This is the Chok of the Torah" before it all started, because that is what Torah is all about.

A Southern Bubbe is 'Mechaven' to a Steipler Later in the Parsha, the verse says, "This is the law (Torah), when a person dies in a tent..." [Bamidbar 19:14]. There is a famous teaching of our Sages regarding this verse: "Torah does not become established within a person, unless he is prepared to die for the Torah" [Berachos 63b]. In order to become accomplished in Torah learning, a person must make sacrifices for Torah. Even though it is important and is something we should all be aware of, I am not going to elaborate on how the great people of previous generations, who endured great personal sacrifice (mesiras nefesh) to learn Torah, knew what it means to "kill oneself for Torah." However, I do want to read an excerpt from a volume entitled "Peninei Rabbeinu HaKehillas Yakov." This is a book published by someone who was close to the Steipler Rav, and who recorded incidents that he personally witnessed involving the Steipler. As we all know, if there was anyone in our generation who fulfilled the idea of "killing oneself for the opportunity to learn Torah," it was the Steipler Rav. Not only was the Steipler a great Gaon, a genius, he was an amazing Masmid, one who studied constantly. The author quotes a letter written by the Steipler to a Yeshiva student, who asked him for advice as to which Yeshiva to attend and for a blessing that he be successful in learning: "I give you a blessing that you should be successful in your learning. However you must know that becoming a Gadol B'Torah does not come from blessings. There is only one way (eitzah achas) to accomplish success in learning -- is to distance oneself from wasting time (batalah) and to save every moment (for Torah learning). Also, there is no difference which Yeshiva you attend. The Yeshiva does not determine the success of the student; only his diligence determines the success. If you learn with intensity, you will succeed in Torah, wherever you are. If you waste your time, the great fame of the Yeshiva you choose will not help you become a Talmid Chochoh." There are no shortcuts. The only way to achieve greatness in learning is not to waste time. It is not the place that makes the difference; it is the person himself. One does not become a bigger Lamdan because of the "name brand recognition" of the Yeshiva he attends.

I was recently in Memphis. An elderly woman came over to me and asked, "What can you do with the Yeshiva guys today? My grandson tells me, 'I cannot learn over here because the Rebbe is no good and the chavrusa is not good, and that is not good...' Why are they always making up excuses? Why do we try to hand Torah to everyone on a silver platter? If it is not a silver platter, but only a bronze platter, it is 'no good.' Everything has to be easy today. If it is not easy then it becomes 'the Rebbe's fault, the Yeshiva's fault, the chavrusa's fault, it's everybody else's fault!' What can we do about this attitude?" I was amazed that here this 'Southern Bubbe,' complete with a Southern accent, is hitting the nail right on the head! As the Steipler said, "It is not the Yeshiva that determines success, it is the student." To be successful in learning there is only one simple way -- sit down and do it. Plug away -- hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month -- without wasting time. Put in the time and get somewhere. If one does not put in the time, neither the Yeshiva nor the Rebbe will matter. "Ain Hadavar talui ela bi" (The matter is dependant only upon myself) [Yevamos 78b; Avodah Zarah 17a].

Sources and Personalities Sefer HaChinuch -- The Book of Education, a catalog of the 613 commandments, organized in the order of the weekly Torah portions. Published by Rav Aharon HaLevi of Barcelona in 13th century Spain. Rav Yakov Kaminetzky -- (1891-1986), Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Torah V'Daas; New York City.

R. Yosef Shaul Natanson -- (1810-1875); author of classic responsa Sho'el U'Ma'ishiv; Av Beis Din of Levov (Lemberg). Vilna Gaon -- Rav Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman of Vilna (1720-1797), Vilna; Torah Genius; author of numerous scholarly works and commentaries. Steipler Gaon -- Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kaniefsky (1899-1985); author of Chidushei Torah on numerous tractates called Kehillas Ya'akov; Bnei Brak.

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SHABBAT SHALOM: Perfect no more By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(July 10) "And Moses raised his hand, and struck the rock twice with his staff; and the water came out abundantly..." (Num. 20:11) Why is striking a rock to produce water considered a sin so terrible that it prevents Moses from being able to fulfil his life's dream of entering the Promised Land?

In this week's portion of Hukat we read how the people begin complaining: "Why did you take us out of Egypt and bring us to this terrible place?" (Num. 20:5) God tells Moses to take his staff, assemble the community and "speak to the rock in their presence, and it will give forth its water." But Moses, after taking his staff and assembling the people, instead of talking to the rock, talks to the community: "Listen now, you rebels, shall we fetch you water out of this rock?" And then he strikes the rock twice with his staff. In simple dramatic terms, this verse records the beginning of the end of Moses' life. Up until this point, he kept moving toward higher and higher spiritual states. But after he strikes the rock, he's no longer the perfect leader. "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the presence of the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly to the land that I have given you." (Num. 20:12) BuWhat compounds our problem in understanding the nature of Moses' transgression is that he was once before commanded to extract water from a rock - and specifically by striking it. Back in the portion of Yitro, the people complain of thirst, Moses prays, and God instructs the prophet to strike the rock and thereby provide them with water. (Ex.17:5-7) Why is he now condemned for doing what he had previously been commanded to do? Moreover, in our portion of Hukat, although Moses is indeed instructed to speak to the rock, he is also told by God to take up a staff. Why else would the Almighty have asked him to take a staff?

Maimonides, in his introduction to Ethics of the Fathers called Eight Chapters, maintains that Moses' real sin was that he became angry with the nation: "And his sin was that he moved to the extreme, from patience to irritability." From a psychological perspective it's almost as if he had wished to hit the Israelites themselves. And a leader who has lost his passionate love for his people cannot continue to lead them. But how can we understand Moses' sudden impatience with a nation he has shepherded with such love and compassion for so many years? Moses was originally picked by the Almighty because of the sensitivity he showed towards each and every sheep when he was in charge of his father-in-law Jethro's flock in Midian. Indeed, Moses' love for his people was so great that he gave up a principedom in the palace of Pharaoh when he slew an Egyptian who was beating up a Hebrew. And when God suggests, as a result of the sin of the golden calf, that He will destroy the Israelites and start a new nation with Moses alone, the prophet implores God to "blot me out of Your Book, but forgive the Israelites!" Why does Moses now lose his temper? We must remember that the portion of Hukat opens with the paradoxical laws of the red heifer: the ones who purify the impure, themselves become impure in the process. My teacher Rav J. B. Soloveitchik maintained that not only is this comprehensible, but it is the way of the world. A

priest-teacher who remains in the rarefied atmosphere of the study hall and sanctuary will never become defiled. But if he goes out to the market-place and attempts to uplift those who have become impure, at least a scintilla of their impurity will rub off on him.

In the deepest sense, Moses provided the people with the means to become purified. His entire life is nothing but a life of service dedicated toward purifying a nation that had become polluted by the abominations of Egypt. But if indeed Moses' spiritual level is the highest attainable for a human - for after all it was only he who spoke to God "face to face" - he has nevertheless been forced to spend his time trapped in the politics of leading a motley, mundane, irascible and complaining nation. The cry for water is the straw that breaks the prophet's back. After all these years of miracles, commandments and instructions, it seems as if the people are exactly where they had been originally. For an altogether understandable moment, Moses the great purifier has assumed a bit of their anger, of their irritation, of their irascibility. They have finally "gotten to him." But such a Moses, decides the Almighty, cannot continue to lead his people to Israel. In order for a great leader to accept upon himself the risk and result of impurity, he must be filled with immense and unconditional love for his people. If Moses has - for the most understandable reason - lost that love, he can no longer successfully lead and purify! The greatest Jew in Jewish history is thus forced to relinquish his position of leadership because of a people not yet ready for ultimate redemption.

Shabbat Shalom Rabbi Riskin

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TORAH WEEKLY Ohr Somayach

Dedicated in memory of R. Gedaliah Dovid Ben Isser Henry of Manchester England on the occasion of his Yahrzeit 7 Tammuz

THE RIGHT CLUB "Then Moshe raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff twice." (20:11) If you've ever played golf, you'll know how important it is to choose the right club. By 'club,' I don't mean what sort of society to mix in; rather the tool of preference to move the ball from the tee to the hole most accurately and efficiently. If you're on the fairway, you probably need a wooden club. If you use an iron club, you'll be wasting your energy, because the power of your swing will not connect with the ball to its maximum efficiency. On the other hand if you are in a sand trap, you'll need a heavily angled iron to chip the ball back onto the grass fairway. If you use a wood, it will be next to useless. It all depends on using the right tool for the job. A Jew's 'club' is his voice. So much of what we do, we do with our voices: Prayer, Torah study, blessings. As Yitzchak said when he felt Yaakov's arms covered with goatskins, "The voice is the voice of Yaakov, and the hands are the hands of Esav." (Bereishis 26:22) The Voice is given to Yaakov. And the Hands, to Esav. The internal power which emanates from the heart - that's the Voice, the external power of action. The Hand is the domain of Esav. In our times, it is Esav who sends men to the moon, who builds cities of glass and steel that scrape the sky, who plumbs the depths of the ocean trenches. Esav knows how to use his hands. And while Yaakov can also vie with Esav in these fields, when he does, he's really not playing with his ideal 'club.' When Moshe hit the rock instead of speaking to it, he was sending out a message which contradicted the fundamental essence of the Jewish People. It was as if he was saying: "The voice isn't adequate. You need to use Esav's skills, Esav's hands." The power of the Jewish People is not in its arms. It is in its voice. The voice lifted up in prayer. The voice of concern and brotherhood. The voice of Torah ringing from the halls of study. That's the only 'club' of which we need to be members. ... Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer HTML Design: Eli Ballon, Michael Treblow \_ 1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved. This publication may be distributed to another person intact without prior permission. We also encourage you to include this material in other publications, such as synagogue newsletters. However, we ask that you contact us beforehand for permission, and then send us a sample issue. Ohr Somayach's Web site is hosted by Virtual Jerusalem

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\* PARSHA Q&A \* Ohr Somayach Parshas Chukas

Parsha Questions 1. "Take a perfect Parah Adumah (red heifer) which has no blemish." What does the word 'perfect' (temima) mean in this context? 2. How many non-red hairs disqualify a cow as a valid Parah Adumah? 3. A man dies in a tent. What happens to the sealed metal and earthenware utensils in the tent? 4. What happens to the one who: a) Sprinkles the water mixed with the ashes of the Parah Adumah; b) Touches the water; c) Carries the water? 5. Why was the mitzvah of the Parah Adumah entrusted to Elazar rather than to Aaron? 6. Why does the Torah stress that all of the congregation came to Midbar Tzin? 7. Why is Miriam's death taught after the section of the Parah Adumah? 8. During their journey in the midbar, through who's merit did the Jewish People receive water? 9. Why did Moshe need to strike the rock a second time? 10. When Moshe told the King of Edom that the Jewish People would not drink from the well-water, to which well did he refer? What do we learn from this? 11. The cloud that led the Jewish People in the midbar leveled all the mountains that were in their path except for three. Which three and why? 12. Why did the entire congregation mourn the death of Aaron? 13. What disappeared when Aaron died? 14. Who was "the

inhabitant of the South" (21:1) that attacked the Jewish People? 15. For what two reasons did Hashem punish the people with snakes specifically? 16. Why did the Jewish People camp in Arnon, rather than pass through Moav to enter Eretz Canaan? 17. What miracle took place at the valley of Arnon? 18. What was the "strength" of Amon that prevented the Jewish People from entering into their land? 19. Why was Moshe afraid of Og? 20. Who killed Og?

Bonus QUESTION "...Give water to the people and to their animals." (20:8) The Talmud states that it is forbidden to eat before feeding your animals. As for drinking, the Magen Avraham rules that you may drink before giving water to your animals. As a support for this, the Magen Avraham cites the example of Rivka, who said to Eliezer, "Drink, and (afterwards) I will give water to your camels, too." Why doesn't the Magen Avraham cite as support the verse from this week's Parsha, in which Hashem tells Moshe to "give water to the people" and only afterwards "and to their animals"?

I Did Not Know That! "Speak to the rock..." (20:8) Hashem told Moshe to 'teach' the rock a single chapter of the Mishna. When the rock would thus give forth water, this would impress upon the Jewish People the awesome power and importance of Torah study. Yalkut Shimoni as explained by Rabbi Shmuel Faivelson, shlita

Recommended Reading List Ramban 20:1 The Whole Congregation 21:9 The Serpent 21:21 Imperative for Peace 21:34 Fear of Og Ohr HaChaim 20:8 The Sin of Moshe Sforno 19:2 Parah Adumah 20:26 Aaron's Special Shroud

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated. 1. 19:2 - Perfectly red. 2. 19:2 - Two. 3. 19:14,15 - The metal utensils are impure for seven days, even if they are sealed. The sealed earthenware vessels are unaffected. 4. 19:21 - a) Remains tahor; b) He, but not his clothing, contracts tumah; c) He and his clothing contract tumah. 5. 45:19:22 (19:3) - Because Aaron was involved in the sin of the golden calf. 6. 20:1 - To teach that they were all fit to enter Eretz Yisrael, because anyone who was involved in the sin of the spies had already died. 7. 20:1 - To teach that just as sacrifices bring atonement, so too does the death of the righteous. 8. 20:2 - Miriam's. 9. 20:11 - After he hit it the first time, only a few drops came out since he was commanded to speak to the rock. 10. 20:17 - To the well that traveled with the nation in the midbar. This teaches that even if one has adequate provisions he should purchase goods from his host in order to benefit the host. 11. 20:22 - The mountains that were spared were Har Sinai for the giving of the Torah, Har Nevo for Moshe's burial place, and Hor Hahar for Aaron's burial place. 12. 20:29 - Aaron made peace between contending parties and between spouses. Thus, when he died, everybody mourned. 13. 20:29 - The an 14. anei hakavod (clouds of glory) disappeared, since they sheltered the Jewish People in the merit of Aaron. 15. 21:1 - Amalek. 16. 21:6 - The original snake, who was punished for speaking evil, is fitting to punish those who spoke evil about Hashem and about Moshe. And the snake, for whom everything tastes like dust, is fitting to punish those who complained about the manna which changed to any desired taste. 17. 21:13 - Moav refused to let them pass through their land. 18. 21:15 - The Amorites concealed themselves in caves in the mountain on the Moabite side of the valley in order to ambush the Jewish People. When the Jewish People approached, the mountain on the Eretz Canaan side of the valley moved close to the other mountain and the Amorites were crushed between the two mountains. 19. 21:24 - Hashem's command, "Do not harass them" (Devarim 2:19). 20. 21:34 - Og had once been of service to Avraham. Moshe was afraid that this merit would assist Og in battle. 21. 21:35 - Moshe.

Bonus ANSWER: It is a Torah principle that 'one should not rely on a miracle.' For example, one should not do something dangerous and say "I'm in no danger, because G-d will protect me miraculously." Being in a desert with no natural water source is life-threatening. In such a situation, a person is obligated to preserve his life at the expense of his animal's life. Therefore, the people were not allowed to give the first water to the animals, because they would then need to rely on Hashem to produce more 'miracle water' for their own self-preservation. The Magen Avraham's proof from Rivka, on the other hand, applies even to a situation where there is ample natural water for both people and animals. Mege Yosef

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1997 Ohr Somayach International

Adaptation of Likutei Sichos by Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion W-2 Chukas

The Tenth Red Heifer The Torah portion of Chukas begins with the laws of the Parah Adumah, the Red Heifer, whose ashes were used to ritually purify a person who had come in contact with a dead body. The Rambam states in Yad HaChazakah, Laws of Parah Adumah: "Nine Parah Adumos were made from the time it was first commanded until the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash. Moshe made the first; Ezra the second; and seven more from the time of Ezra until the destruction of the Temple. The tenth will be made by Moshiach. May he be speedily revealed, Amen. May He so will it." Yad HaChazakah is a book of laws, not a history book. What difference does it make from the perspective of Jewish law how many Parah Adumos were offered

in previous generations? Moreover, why does the Rambam go on to add a prayer for the coming of Moshiach? We must say that, by doing so, the Rambam is hinting at a matter of law, for it is customary for him to allude to matters of law through the exactitude of his terminology, and by prefacing one law with another. With regard to the obligation to believe in the coming of Moshiach, the Rambam states: "Whoever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only [the statements of] the other prophets, but also [those of] the Torah and of Moshe, our teacher." In other words, mere belief in Moshiach's coming does not suffice, we are also obligated to hope for and await his arrival. Moreover, this anticipation is to be in accordance with our thrice-daily recitation of the Amidah prayers: "Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish... for we hope for Your salvation all day." This longing for the coming of Moshiach arises from the Jews' feeling that, as long as Moshiach has not arrived, they are incomplete. In light of the above, it is clear that when an individual who eagerly awaits Moshiach mentions something in conjunction with him, then even if there is only a peripheral connection, his longing will be roused. Thus, it becomes a personal need for which one is obligated to pray. Consequently, the Jew prays that he witness Moshiach's arrival as speedily as possible. By inserting the prayer "May he be speedily revealed, Amen. May He so will it," and moreover, by doing so at the earliest appropriate opportunity, the Rambam emphasizes how intense should be the "anticipation of his arrival"; as soon as an opportunity presents itself, even if the connection is only casual, a Jew should be aroused to pray "May he be speedily revealed, Amen. May He so will it." Since all aspects of Torah are precise, it follows that there is a conceptual relationship between the laws of the Parah Adumah and the coming of Moshiach. This is why the Rambam mentions the awaiting of Moshiach's arrival in the laws of Parah Adumah, although the Moshiach is mentioned in Yad HaChazakah before the laws of the Parah Adumah. The relationship between the laws of the Parah Adumah and the coming of Moshiach is as follows: Exile is related to the concept of ritual defilement -- coming in contact with spiritual death. For the exile came about through iniquities -- the element of "You who cleave unto G-d your L-rd are all alive today" was lacking. The ashes of the Parah Adumah, offering purification from the defilement of death, allude to the time of Moshiach's coming, the time of redemption from exile, when Jews under their bonds with spiritual death, for they then all cleave to G-d and are thus vitally alive. May Moshiach come and redeem us speedily in our days. In the words of the Rambam: "May he be speedily revealed, Amen. May He so will it." Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 131-137

Peninim on the Torah Parshas Chukas

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And they wept for Aharon thirty days, all the House of Yisrael. (20:29) Aharon's special relationship with all people earned him the love of everyone. When he passed away, every Jewish man, woman, and child grieved. The quintessent Ohaiv Shalom, he extended himself to promote harmony among his fellow man and between husband and wife. The vacuum caused by his death was acutely felt by everyone. We see that Moshe Rabbeinu, the Rabbon shel kol Yisrael, the teacher who devoted his life to educating Klal Yisrael, was not as universally mourned. As the Yalkut explains, Moshe's responsibility was to judge and admonish, a function that was not always accepted by everyone. Thus, the love that everyone had for him was, at times, minimized. How did Aharon go about his "outreach" to others? Chazal tell us that he would greet all Jews with a bright hello. Afterwards, if a person desired to sin, he felt ashamed, since he would not be able to face Aharon after having done wrong. Consequently, Aharon's good cheer for everyone effected a positive rise in the spiritual climate of Klal Yisrael. Indeed, every Jew felt close to Aharon, so he would be unable to do something that would make him feel bad. This would imply that at all times we are to act in a positive and amicable manner towards all people, regardless of their religious persuasion. This idea is apparently incongruous with the middah of emes, truth. If one is a rasha, his evil really cannot be mitigated. After all, is that not what Moshe Rabbeinu did? He admonished and criticized when an individual did something wrong. He seemed to "tell it like it is." Whose approach was actually more acceptable--Aharon's or Moshe's? Interestingly, in the Talmud Sanhedrin 6B Chazal present these variegated approaches and posit a significant lesson. We are taught that Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Yosi Ha'Glili said, "It is forbidden to arbitrate in a settlement, and he who arbitrates offends, and whoever praises such an arbitration contempts Hashem." He proves this statement by using Moshe as an example. Moshe presented the law as it was, literally as if it were to cut through a mountain. Nothing stood in the way of the law. Immediately after this statement, Chazal say that Aharon would act differently. He loved peace and pursued peace and would, therefore, attempt to effect a compromise between both parties, so that they would not need to go to court. We note that while Chazal criticize the arbitrator and extol Moshe as the example of he who remains loyal to the truth, regardless of the consequences, they praise Aharon for his approach to peaceful conciliation. They seem to have high regard for Aharon's manner of doing things. Tosfos add that Aharon was able to seek and effect compromise only because he was not a judge. One who is a judge, such as Moshe, before whom the halachic dispute was presented, must adjudicate

according to the law--without compromise. What is it to be--the way of Aharon or the way of Moshe?

Horav Avraham Yitzchak Bloch, zl, suggests that both Aharon and Moshe had the right approaches. What appears to be incongruous is -- in reality -- consistent. We must realize, however, that rendering a decision of truth is different from the manner in which one conveys the decision to people. The actual psak, decision, must adhere totally to the letter of the law. There is no room for compromise when it affects the truth. The truth of Torah is immutable, leaving no room for error. When the decision is communicated to people, it is essential that it is given over in such a positive manner that it encourages optimum acceptance. We must respect the feelings and sensitivities of people, what appeals to them, and conversely, what affects them adversely. Not everyone is inclined to accept the truth in its stark reality. For many it must be couched in sensitive and soothing terms. This idea applies equally to the individual. One cannot address a person in the same manner when he is on the upswing as when he is in a depressed state. In order for a person to accept the truth when his mind is under strain, it is incumbent that it be presented in a sensitive and caring manner. Moshe Rabbeinu was the lawgiver. He was the vehicle through which Klal Yisrael would learn the Torah in its entirety. He was to present daas Torah, the Torah's "thoughts," on every issue as fact, in black and white. There are no gray areas in halachah. Our Torah is Toras Emes, the Torah of truth, without embellishments, unalterable, uncompromising, and unbiased. Halachah is an absolute, for it comes from Hashem. Moshe was to give over the Torah in its pristine form. It was Aharon's function to imbue into the hearts of the people the Torah which Moshe transmitted. In doing so, Aharon had to consider each individual Jew. How is he to be inspired? What will impress him? How can he be moved to accept the Torah into his heart and mind? Unequivocally, Aharon did not sway one iota from the truth as Moshe presented it--even in the pursuit of peace. Never can Torah be compromised. He, however, sought different ways to make the Torah and some of the difficult decisions that must be rendered -- more "palatable" to all people. The Torah did not change--Aharon's presentation reflected the need of every individual.  
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differ as to whether or not such an appetizer is an intrinsic part of the meal, since it is served as a "introduction" to the meal. The commonly accepted practice is not to recite a blessing over fruits served as appetizers(4). The same applies to olives and pickles served before the actual meal. CANTALOUPE - and other such fruits, e.g., fruit cocktail, melon, honeydew. Contemporary poskim debate the halachah concerning these fruits. Some consider them appetizers just like grapefruit, which - according to our custom - exempts them from a blessing(5). Other poskim, however, consider these fruits as a first course of a meal. In their opinion, these fruits do not merely whet the appetite - they are full-fledged first courses. Since, as explained, fruits are not normally eaten with bread, the ha-motzi blessing did not exempt them and a separate blessing is required(6). Thus the proper blessing remains questionable and problematic. It is recommended that one follow either of the following two methods: 1) Before washing, recite the proper blessing over a small piece of fruit, then wash for the bread, and continue eating the fruit(7); 2) Eat the fruit while eating bread along with each bite of fruit(8).

DURING THE MEAL: Fruit soup - no blessing is recited(9). Cooked fruits as a side dish - no blessing is recited(10). Applesauce with a latke - no blessing is recited(11). Fruit eaten as the main course of the meal - most poskim hold that no blessing is required. Since there is a minority opinion that requires a blessing, it is best to eat a sizable amount of bread before partaking of the fruit(12). Fruit filled blintzes, etc. - no blessing is recited(13). Fruit eaten as a snack between courses - requires a blessing.

DESSERT: Raw fruit (apples, grapes, etc.) - the correct blessing is recited(14). Cooked fruit - there are conflicting views. Most poskim hold that a blessing should be recited(15), while a minority opinion holds that no blessing is recited(16). One who wants to avoid a questionable situation should eat cooked fruit only with bread(17) or recite a blessing over a raw fruit before eating the cooked fruit(18). Popcorn - the correct blessing (ha-adamah) is recited. Peanuts - the correct blessing (ha-adamah) is recited. Chocolate - the correct blessing (shehakol) is recited.

GENERAL RULE: No fruits eaten during a meal, whether a blessing was recited over them or not, require a Berachah Acharonah. The Birkas ha-Mazon will exempt them all(19).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:41. 2 With the exception of dates which are covered by the Birkas ha-Mazon. 3 When the grapefruit is eaten for the sake of the grapefruit itself and is considered one of the courses at the meal (such as when a grapefruit is eaten on a diet), the blessing should be recited. 4 Mishnah Berurah 174:39; Aruch ha-shulchan 174:12. One who would like to satisfy the other view should recite the blessing and eat part of the grapefruit before washing his hands. 5 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 93). 6 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesain Berachah, pg. 93). Ohr ITziyon 46:15. 7 Based on Mishnah Berurah 174:39 and 176:2 (Alef). 8 Mishnah Berurah 177:8 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyon 13. 9 Biur Halachah 177:1; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 76). 10 Biur Halachah 177:1; Aruch ha-Shulchan 177:10. There is a minority view which requires a blessing, so it is better to eat with bread or recite a blessing on raw fruit - ibid. 11 Ibid. 12 O.C. 177:3 and Biur Halachah. 13 Mishnah Berurah 177:10. 14 O.C. 177:1. 15 Mishnah Berurah 177:4; Chazon Ish (Dinim v'Hanhagos 6:7); Orchos Rabbeinu 66; Yalkut Yosef, pg. 196; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 78 and Vesain Berachah, pg. 87). 16 Several sources report that the Chafetz Chaim eventually changed his ruling and exempted cooked fruits served for dessert from a blessing, see Orchos Rabbeinu 86. = 17 Custom of the Brisker Rav (quoted in Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:177); Harav A. Kotler (reported by several disciples). 18 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 78). 19 Mishnah Berurah 177:7.

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WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5757 COPYRIGHT 1996-7  
SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS CHUKAS

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

A fig, or grape or pomegranate (19:5)

PROPER BLESSING OVER FRUIT DURING A MEAL While the laws governing the blessings over fruit are complex, they become even more so when fruits are eaten right before a meal, or during a meal as an appetizer or a dessert. There are many details and different views to consider on the subject, but we will attempt to review these halachos in as concise and organized manner as possible. There is one basic rule to bear in mind: The blessing of ha-motzi, recited over bread at the beginning of the meal, includes anything in the meal which is normally eaten with bread - even though it is not actually being eaten with bread at this particular moment. Meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, cheese, and other foods eaten to satisfy one's hunger are all foods normally eaten with bread, and are therefore included in the ha-Motzi blessing. Fruit, on the other hand, is not normally eaten with bread. It is eaten as a separate food within the meal and therefore requires its own blessing. This basic principle is agreed upon by practically all the early authorities and is recorded in Shulchan Aruch. What remains unclear and in dispute is the exact classification of certain fruits - cooked or raw - which are eaten either as an appetizer or as a dessert. These can be classified either as aiding in the preparation or digestion of the meal, which would exempt them from a blessing, or as an independent part of the meal, which would require that a blessing be recited over them. In many cases the poskim differ and no clear consensus emerges. We must, however, establish some basic guidelines: = Note: Although the ha-motzi exempts all other foods which are normally eaten with bread, this holds true only if at least a k'zayis of bread is eaten within 3-4 minutes at one point during the meal. If a k'zayis is not eaten within that time span, each food eaten during the meal requires its own blessing. One must, therefore, decide at the beginning of the meal if he is going to eat a k'zayis of bread or not(1).

FRUIT EATEN BEFORE THE MEAL: One who eats fruit before a meal and plans to eat fruit during the meal as well [a common occurrence on Rosh Hashanah night], should recite the proper blessing over the fruit before the meal begins, while intending to exempt the fruits which will be eaten later. No Berachah Acharonah is made over the fruits eaten before starting the meal - the Birkas ha-Mazon recited at the end of the meal includes them. If, however, one has no intention of eating fruit during the meal, then a Berachah Acharonah must be recited over the fruit eaten before the meal began. The Birkas ha-Mazon after the meal does not include that fruit(2), and a Berachah Acharonah will have to be recited over them even after Birkas ha-Mazon was said.

FRUITS EATEN DURING THE MEAL BUT BEFORE THE MAIN COURSE IS SERVED: GRAPEFRUIT - usually eaten to whet the appetite(3). The Rishonim

From: Edward Wipper[SMTP:wipper@torah.org]

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