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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON CHUKAS - 5772

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From: Rabbi Michael Rosensweig - Absolute Emunah as a Test and
Prerequisite of National Leadership TorahWeb torahweb@torahweb.org
Rabbi Michael Rosensweig

Absolute Emunah as a Test and Prerequisite of National Leadership

Parshat Chukat recounts the episode of mei merivah which disqualified Moshe Rabbeinu from leading Am Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael. While the precise transgression is ambiguous, even obscure, and subject to a wide range of different interpretations, the Torah does characterize and crystallize the decisive flaw that terminated his role. "Yaan asher lo heemantem bi le-hakdisheini le-einei Benei Yisrael lachein lo taviu et ha-kahal ha-zeh el haaretz asher natati lahem" (Bamidbar 20:12).

Elsewhere (TorahWeb 2008 - Kiddush Hashem as a Component of National Leadership), we have explored the impact of the lost opportunity for Kiddush Hashem on Moshe's leadership credentials, but in conjunction with this motif the Torah does strikingly emphasize a failure of emunah, as well. Is it conceivable that Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest prophet and paradigm of "eved Hashem" was deficient in his faith? Indeed, the Malbim innovatively interprets ("lo heemantem") the flaw of "yaan asher lo heemantem bi" not as a failure of personal or even public faith, but as the squandered opportunity to inculcate, promote, or advance faith in others. According to this perspective, the primary transgression is that of Kiddush Hashem.

However, the Ibn Ezra projects the breakdown in emunah as a central feature. This position is reinforced by several gemarot, as well that focus on the words in the pasuk pertaining to an absence of emunah without

also relating to the issue of Kiddush Hashem. The gemara in Shabbat 55b declares that there is no death without sin (ein mitah beli cheit) and that Moshe Rabbeinu is no exception to this rule based on the verse "yaan asher lo heemantem bi". The gemara in Yoma 86b contrasts the leadership styles of Moshe Rabbeinu and King David, noting that Moshe, in sharp contrast to David, encouraged the public exposure of his emunah violation (Moshe amar yichtov sirchoni she-nemar yaan asher lo heemantem bi). Similarly, the gemara (Yoma 87a) notes that had Moshe Rabbeinu stood the test of faith in this episode, he would not have been stripped of his leadership or died prematurely (ha heemantem bi adayin lo higia zemanchem lehipater min ha-olam ha-zeh).

How is it possible that Moshe Rabbeinu, whose absolute loyalty is unequivocally attested to by Hashem ("b-echol beiti neeman hu"), could have been flawed in the area of emunah? Moreover, Moshe Rabbeinu certainly did not simply ignore or defy Hashem's charge. Chazal and the various mefarshim invariably explain Moshe's thinking, the rationale for his conduct (see, for example, Rashi and Malbim). While Moshe evidently erred, possibly egregiously, how can an error be construed as a failing of faith?

Evidently, the character and intensity of emunah required of the single and singular leader who will facilitate the destiny of Klal Yisrael by leading them into Eretz Yisrael thereby cementing their status as an am Hashem, a mamlechet kohanim ve-goy kadosh, is one that is absolute, instinctive, and uncompromising. This standard of faith demands a reflexive response to Hashem's command, even when that entails suspending judgment or eschewing the usual canons of logic and rationality, even as they are generally legitimately applied within the confines and context of religious belief. The fact that Moshe had a strong logical basis to reinterpret and adapt the zivui Hashem rather than simply forthrightly implement it as commanded precisely tested this standard. In this case, Moshe was found wanting. This very basic, yet very elevated standard of emunah constitutes a prerequisite of quintessential national leadership. Profound yet simple emunah does not tolerate the slightest posturing, equivocation, wavering, or momentary lapses; it precludes even reservations or calculations that in other contexts are acceptable, even desirable.

This rigorous standard of emunah stems from the very origins of Jewish leadership, the persona of Avraham Avinu, the father of the nation (av hamon goyim). Avraham introduced the standard of intense, unqualified, and instinctive emunah and integrated it into the leadership profile of Klal Yisrael when he unequivocally and unreservedly accepted the apparently paradoxical promise that he would produce a great nation notwithstanding his age and the implications of his previous personal history. The Torah encapsulates this rigorous and spiritually ambitious perspective on emunah the very first time it introduces the term- "vehemin ba-Hashem vayahsheveha le-zedakah" (Bereishit 15:6). [See TorahWeb 2008 Avraham Avinu and the Concept of Emunah]

The fact that Avraham's manifestation of absolute emunah is preceded by an assertion regarding Jewish nationhood (15:5- "va-yotzei oto ha-chutzah vayomer habet na hashamaymah u-sefor ha-kochavim im tuchal lispor otam; vayomer lo koh yihiyeh zarecha"), and followed by the promise of a national homeland in eretz yisrael (15:7- "vayomer eilav ani Hashem asher hotzeiticha mei-Ur Kasdim latet lecha et ha-aretz hazot lerishtah") may further reinforce and illuminate the dire consequences of Moshe Rabbeinu's subtle but devastating lapse of absolute, instinctive and uncalculating emunah. Even the incomparable Moshe Rabbeinu was held to Avraham Avinu's pure and profound emunah standard with respect to national leadership and the establishment of Eretz Yisrael as the repository of Klal Yisrael. The special destiny of "am Hashem" in its national homeland would tolerate nothing less.

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from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand ryfrand@torah.org reply-to:
ryfrand@torah.org, genesis@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org
date: Thu, Jun 28, 2012 at 1:05 PM subject:

Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Chukas

Parshas Chukas These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #819, Mayim Geluyim - Uncovered Water - Is There a Problem. Good Shabbos!

Watch Out For Those Transitional Periods In Life

Parshas Chukas contains one of the sadder incidents in the life of Moshe Rabbeinu. When the nation arrived at the Wilderness of Tzin, Miriam died and the congregation found themselves without water. The people complained to Moshe and Aharon and again used the arguments, "Why have you brought the congregation to this wilderness to die there we and our animals? Why did you bring us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil place? This is not a place of seed or fig tree or grapevine or pomegranate tree; and there is no water to drink." [Bamidbar 20:4-5]

Moshe Rabbeinu somehow reacted inappropriately and this caused him to lose his opportunity to enter Eretz Yisrael. Rav Simcha Zissel in his Sefer Sam Derech on Bamidbar asks a very interesting question: According to the Ramban, the incident of Korach occurred right after the incident of the Spies. This means that all the events in Parshas Shlach and Korach occurred in the second year after the Exodus. However, Parshas Chukas occurred in the fortieth year after the Exodus, approximately 38 years later. They were now on the threshold of entry into the Land of Israel.

All the troubles and complaints up until now occurred in the first 18 months in the Desert. However, the incident at Mei Meriva in Parshas Chukas occurred in year 40. Rav Simcha Zissel asks, "What happened in between?" Rav Simcha Zissel answers that we see from the Mishna in Avos and the Gemara in Eruchin that for the 38 intervening years, they were perfect. How do we know this? The Mishna [Avos 5:4] lists 10 specific "challenges" that our forefathers tested G-d with in the Wilderness and quotes the following pasuk as a source text for this number "And they tested Me for these ten times" [Bamidbar 14:22]. The Gemara in Eruchin [15a] spells out what those 10 challenges were: Two by Yam Suf, two involving the manna, two with the Quail, two with water (one in Refidim and one in Mei Meriva), one with the Golden Calf, and one in Wilderness of Paran (the Spies). These all happened in the first year and a half, with the exception of Mei Meriva which happened at the very end. Rav Simcha Zissel derives from this that in the intervening 38 years, there were no challenges, no complaints, and the Jewish people behaved perfectly!

This is very much in line with our concept of "The Generation of Knowledge" (dor Deah), the congregation who consumed only manna, and lived within the confines of the Clouds of Glory, and learned Torah for 38 years from Moshe Rabbeinu. They did not need to worry about clothes, food, or a job. They could devote their entire lives to spiritual growth. They could make the following proclamation: "We have not done anything wrong in the last 38 years"! (How many of us could make such a statement?!)

If so, Rav Simcha Zissel wonders, what then happened in year one and two and year 40 that caused Klal Yisrael to "act out" so to speak and challenge the Almighty time and again during those particular periods?

Rav Simcha Zissel offers a very important insight into human nature, which is very important for us to know, vis a vis ourselves and vis a vis our children. Years 1 and years 40 were years of transition. They were going from one stage into the next. They left Egypt, where they were slaves and shortly thereafter, they became a Divine Nation. The journey from the 49th level of impurity to Receiving the Torah was a year of tremendous spiritual upheaval and transition in their lives. Now, on the verge of entering Eretz Yisrael, they also face traumatic transition. They were about to go from an existence of eating manna and drinking water

that flowed from a rock to a normal existence, having to plant, and hoe, and plow, and make business deals and take care of their families. Again they faced transition.

When a person is in a period of transition, he is not serene. When a nation goes through sudden change, they do not have peace of mind and are not at peace with themselves. This lack of calmness makes people vulnerable to make poor decisions and silly mistakes. Without serenity, people cannot make informed decisions.

The lesson Rav Simcha Zissel derives from this is that one must be extremely careful whenever entering a new situation in life, even if the change is a good change. For the most part, the young men I teach in Yeshiva are in periods of transition in their lives. They are either on the verge of shiduchim or they are in shiduchim or they are engaged or newly married or they are new parents. All these phases represent major transitions in one's life. They are wonderful transitions but the transitions can still easily cause upheaval in a person's life. When things are changing and coming at a person from all directions, he lacks "yishuv ha'daas" [peace of mind] and in such situations, he must be particularly careful.

Protecting His Sister's Reputation

The Tzitz Eliezer (Rabbi Yehudah Waldenburg) in Volume 17 #41 of his collected responsa states in the name of the Gerer Rebbe that the text of our daily prayers corroborates the Rambam's understanding of Moshe's avveyra [sin] at Mei Meriva. Rashi (and many others) explain that the avveyra was that he hit the rock instead of speaking to it. The Rambam in Shmoneh Perakim explains that the avveyra was the fact that he seemingly lost his temper with the Jewish people when he lashed out at them saying: "Hear this please, you rebels" [Bamidbar 20:10]. According to the Rambam, it had nothing to do with hitting the rock.

The Tzitz Eliezer, in the name of the Gerer Rebbe, supports Maimonides approach based on the passage we say in Tefillas Geshem [the prayer for rain] (recited on Shmini Atzeres) in which we say, "At the time Your treasured people thirsted for water, he struck the rock and out came water... For the sake of his righteousness, grant abundant water!" The Gerer Rebbe argues that if Moshe Rabbeinu's hitting the rock was a mistake (as Rashi says) this would not be the proper thing to bring up during Tefillas Geshem. Even though one might argue that the reference to hitting the rock does not refer to the incident in Parshas Chukas but rather to the incident in Parshas BeShalach, when he was indeed commanded to hit the rock, but still – as the common expression goes – "Don't go there!"

However, the Tzitz Eliezer himself discounts this question on Rashi's explanation. He provides an alternate interpretation of the phrase used in Tefillas Geshem:

They received the water all of these years in the merit of Miriam. Miriam died in Parshas Chukas and immediately the water stopped flowing. The question must be asked, why did HaShem change His instructions to Moshe Rabbeinu. Why was Moshe told to hit the rock in Parshas BeShalach and to speak to the rock in Parshas Chukas?

The Lev Aryeh asks this question in Masec hes Chullin. He answers that originally the Well was in the merit of Miriam. Miriam, as great as she was, was not Moshe Rabbeinu. Therefore, the miracle had to occur in a more "natural" fashion. In other words, it is less of a miracle to hit a rock and have water start flowing than to speak to a rock and have the water start flowing. Moshe Rabbeinu is so great that "his" miracles come in the most supernatural fashion. He had such merit that he could have brought water from the rock through his speech – and that is indeed the way the Almighty instructed him to re-initiate the flow of water from the rock after its suspension with the death of Miriam. Moshe Rabbeinu knew that he could bring forth water from the rock through his speech. However, he was concerned that this would somehow cheapen the reputation of his sister who only had enough merit – so to speak – to have water flow from the rock by force (i.e. – hitting the rock). He did

not want to appear to be greater or more meritorious than his sister. Therefore, BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS and humility, he hit the rock. This is exactly what we say in Tefillas Geshem.

This then fits in very well. We tell the Almighty in Tefillas Geshem of our need for rain. We tell Him we might not be worthy of this great blessing, but we are desperate for it. We beseech Hashem to go above and beyond His Strict Attributes (to be ma'avir al Midosav). We invoke the memory of Moshe Rabbeinu. He could have spoken to the rock to make water come out. But Moshe Rabbeinu went "above and beyond". He did not want to take any extra credit for himself and wanted to protect his sister's reputation. For this act of magnanimity on Moshe's part, we ask that G-d to also act magnanimously with us. This is why we mention Mei Meriva even by Tefillas Geshem.

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are: Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD RavFrand, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> or email learn@torah.org to get your own free copy of this mailing.

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to Daf Parshas Chukas

Para Aduma - Statute of Limitations
Rabbi Yosef Levinson

This week's parsha discusses the mitzva of Para Aduma, the red heifer. We are commanded to slaughter and burn the para aduma. Afterwards the ashes are gathered, ready to be mixed with mayim chaim, spring water, to sprinkle and purify one who came into contact with a corpse, tumas hameis. In introducing this mitzva, the passuk is expressed in an unusual way: "Zos chukas HaTorah" - This is the statute of the Torah (Bamidbar 19:2). The Or HaChaim wonders why the passuk doesn't use the more appropriate phrase, *zos chukas hatahara*, purity, or *hatemeiah*, impurity.

He answers that when one observes a mitzva that he understands, it does not necessarily reveal that he is an oved Hashem, a servant of Hashem. If, however, one fulfills a mitzva, of which the meaning is not clear, and he still observes it in all its details, this indicates that he is an oved Hashem. Para aduma is the quintessential chok. More than any other mitzvah, we cannot fathom its meaning. The Sefer HaChinuch explains (Mitzva 397) that the main difficulty with para aduma is the law that those involved in its preparations contract tuma, yet the para aduma purifies one who is tamei. How can something which purifies, be the source of tuma? Therefore the passuk states "Zos chukas HaTorah" - This is the statute of the Torah, implying that one who observes this mitzva, is regarded as having fulfilled the entire Torah. The Or HaChaim concludes that perhaps this was the reason why Hashem transmitted this mitzva to us as a chok.

In his closing remarks, the Or HaChaim alludes to an important lesson which will lead us to another answer to his question. Rashi comments that the yetzer hara and the nations of the world mock us, saying - what

reason is there for this mitzva? Therefore the Torah states that para aduma is a chok - one does not have the right to question it.

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz zt"l, the Mirrer Mashgiach notes that this does not mean that there are no reasons for this mitzva, rather we lack the capacity to comprehend the rationale for para aduma. The wisest of men said concerning para aduma, "I said I will become wise, but it is beyond me." (Koheles 7:23). Chazal explain that Shlomo Hamelech toiled to comprehend this mitzva, but admitted that he could not. Shlomo realised that there is no deeper area of wisdom than para aduma.

The Or HaChaim said that Hashem chose to give this mitzva in this fashion. The Torah is the Davar Hashem. HaKadosh Baruch istachel B'Arrassa u'bara alma - Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world. The Torah is the blueprint of Creation. That we have the capabilities to understand the other mitzvos is not because they are more logical, the Torah was not given because of these reasons. On the contrary, Hashem shaped our minds and revealed these areas of the Torah to us. In reality these areas are also beyond our grasp. We learn this from para aduma. Hashem left this mitzva in its original form. Therefore the passuk states - *Zos chukas HaTorah*. This mitzva reveals that the entire Torah is a chok. Para aduma is the statute of limitations; it reveals our limitations of comprehending the depth and hidden meanings of the Torah.

Although reasons are given for many of the mitzvos, we must realise that the mitzvos are not dependent on these reasons (see Gur Aryeh Bamidbar 19:2). The Hebrew word for reason 'taam', also means taste. The purpose of these reasons is to make the mitzvos "palatable". They enhance our appreciation of the mitzvos and drew us closer to Hashem (see Pirkei Torah Vayikra 1:9). As was mentioned above, the Torah preceded creation. The mitzvos were already written before the reasons were in the realm of possibility.

Later in the parsha of para aduma, the passuk states - "*Zos HaTorah adam ki yamus l'ohel...*" - This is the law of one who dies in a tent... The Sages expand the verse as follows: the words of Torah are only retained by one who kills himself over them (Berachos 63b).

It is fitting that the Torah included this lesson here. From para aduma we learn that Torah is beyond human capabilities, it is purely spiritual. The Maharal explains that man who is materialistic cannot fathom Torah. Man must drive out this drive for materialism and only then can Torah enter and remain a part of him.

The Chafetz Chaim explains that Chazal are also advising us concerning how to motivate ourselves to learn. There was once a wealthy businessman who was constantly involved in his business and had no time to learn. He barely even went to Shul. He was getting on in years and realised that he was not prepared for the next world. How would he defend himself on the Day of Judgement? He started to be meticulous with his shul attendance. He then began to learn. One morning he learned after davening for a few hours. His wife complained that there were many customers waiting for him. The next day he came home even later. His wife accused him of destroying his business and losing his customers. The man responded that if he had died, what would she have done then?

There are many pressing needs, we have to earn a livelihood, give a hand at home. But for some time during the day, one should be 'dead to the world'. When one leaves this world, there are no more phone calls, no more bills to pay. Let us utilise the time now while we still can, before our statute of limitations runs out. Daf-hashavua mailing list Daf-hashavua@shemayisrael.com
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Weekly Halacha

by **Rabbi Doniel Neustadt**
Amplified Sound Waves

Question: Can one fulfill a mitzvah which involves hearing something recited or read, e.g., hearing Havdalah or the reading of the Megillah, by hearing the words over a telephone or from the loudspeaker of a public address system?

Discussion: The answer to this question, extensively debated by the poskim, depends on the halachic interpretation of certain technical facts. Both the telephone and the public address system “transform” sound waves in air, e.g., spoken words, into an electrical current within the instrument, and, ultimately, back into sound waves. It is debatable, though, how the halachah views these sound waves: 1) Are they an extension of the speaker’s voice, merely amplified or carried to a distance that the unassisted human voice cannot reach; or are they 2) distinct from the speaker’s voice, since the loudspeaker or receiver “creates” new sound waves from something—an electrical current, which is not sound?

Translated from technical into halachic terms, the question is whether the mitzvah in question can be fulfilled only with the authentic, original voice of the speaker, or also by means of sounds generated by electrical impulses derived from the original voice and occurring simultaneously with it.

Some earlier authorities were of the opinion that the sound heard over the telephone or from the loudspeaker is the original speaker's voice[1]. It is permitted, therefore, in their opinion[2] to listen to the Megillah read over a public address system or to Havdalah over the telephone.

Other authorities[3] maintained that the halachic view of amplified sounds is difficult to resolve and cannot be clearly decided. Thus in their opinion it remains questionable if mitzvos can be performed by means of a public address system or telephone. It follows, therefore, that only under extenuating circumstances—when no other possibility exists—is it permitted to fulfill a mitzvah by means of a loudspeaker or telephone[4].

However, the majority of the authorities[5] who have studied this issue, including Rav S.Z. Auerbach[6] who researched it extensively with the aid of a team of technical experts[7], have ruled conclusively that the sound waves emitted by a loudspeaker or telephone receiver are definitely not the speaker’s original, authentic voice. In addition, they rule unequivocally that one’s obligation cannot be discharged by hearing an electrically generated sound even if the original speaker’s voice is heard simultaneously. Accordingly, one cannot fulfill a mitzvah by listening to sound waves from a microphone or a telephone[8].

In practice, therefore, it is clear that when another possibility exists, mechanical voice amplifiers should not be used to fulfill a mitzvah. For example, a woman who is home alone and has no one to make Havdalah for her should rather recite Havdalah herself[9] than listen to it being recited by someone else over the telephone. Even if she cannot or will not drink wine, grape juice, or beer, it is preferable for her to recite Havdalah over coffee[10], tea (with or without milk)[11], or milk alone[12] (and, according to some poskim[13], undiluted grapefruit, orange or apple juice as well) than to listen to Havdalah recited over the phone[14]?

If one finds himself in a situation where otherwise he cannot recite Havdalah or hear the Megillah at all, e.g. in a hospital, and there is no one who can come until Tuesday evening[15] to make Havdalah for him, he may have to rely on the poskim who permit listening to blessings, etc., over the telephone[16]. But in a situation where someone could come and recite Havdalah for him before Tuesday evening, the correct procedure is to wait until then for Havdalah to be recited[17]. If he is weak, he may eat before hearing Havdalah. If he is not weak, and he

anticipates that he would be able to hear Havdalah before chatzos Sunday, he should refrain from eating until then[18].

A related issue is whether or not it is permitted to answer Amen to a blessing or Kaddish heard over a microphone, telephone, or during a live telecast transmitted by satellite. Some poskim[19] permit this and do not consider the answering of Amen etc., to be l’vatalah (“for nothing”), since they remain undecided about the halachic status of amplified sound waves, as explained above. In addition, some poskim[20] permit it, based on the ancient precedent set in the great synagogue in Alexandria[21], where most people did not hear the blessings being recited because of its vast size, but were nevertheless permitted to answer Amen when signaled to do so by the waving of a flag.

Rav Auerbach, though, rejects this comparison and rules clearly that it is prohibited to answer Amen upon hearing a blessing in this manner. He agrees, however, that one who is in the vicinity of the speaker, even though he hears the speaker’s voice only over a microphone, etc., is permitted to answer Amen, as was the case in Alexandria where everyone was inside the shul and part of the congregation that was davening[22].

1. Minchas Elazar 2:72; Minchas Aharon 18 (quoted in Tzitz Eliezer 8:11).
2. Their argument is based partially on the fact that sound waves—even without being mechanically transmitted—are carried through the air before they are heard by the listener. The fact that the microphone amplifies those sounds and furthers their distance should not be considered halachically problematic.
3. Rav T. P. Frank (Mikraei Kodesh, Purim 11 and in Minchas Yitzchak 2:113); Igros Moshe, O.C. 2:108; O.C. 4:126. [See, however, Igros Moshe, E.H. 3:33 and O.C. 4:84.] Rav Y.E. Henkin (Eidus l’Yisrael, pg. 122) also does not render a clear decision on this issue. See also Minchas Shelomo 1:9 quoting an oral conversation with the Chazon Ish.
4. Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:91-4 (and oral ruling quoted in Kol ha-Torah, vol. 54, pg. 18); Tzitz Eliezer 8:11. See also Shevet ha-Levi 5:84.
5. Da’as Torah, O.C. 689:2; Gilyonei ha-Shas, Berachos 25a; Eretz Tzvi 1:23; Kol Mevaser 2:25; Mishpatei Uziel 1:5; 1:21; Minchas Yitzchak 1:37, 3:38; She’arim Metzuyanim b’Halachah 129:25; 193:6; Yagel Yaakov, pg. 280, quoting Rav Y.S. Elyashiv and Rav C. Kanievsky; Kinyan Torah 1:75; Yechaveh Da’as 3:54; Moadim u’Zemanim 6:105. See also Teshuvos P’eas Sadcha 1:126 who quotes a similar ruling from Rav C. Soloveitchik.
6. Minchas Shelomo 1:9.
7. Rav Auerbach and Yechaveh Da’as opine that those poskim who dissented from this ruling were not familiar with the relevant technology.
8. Rav Auerbach makes clear that the same ruling applies to hearing-impaired individuals who cannot hear without a hearing aid. Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:85 is hesitant over whether a hearing aid works exactly like a microphone.
9. Women are obligated to recite Havdalah and may recite it themselves. Although there is a well-established custom that women do not drink the wine from the Havdalah cup, this custom is discounted when a woman needs to fulfill her obligation of Havdalah; Mishnah Berurah 296:35; Aruch ha-Shulchan 296:5.
10. Instant or brewed (Rav S.Z. Auerbach, Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchasah 60, note 18).
11. The tea or coffee should be cooled off enough to drink at least 1.6 fl. oz. within 3-4 minutes.
12. Aruch ha-Shulchan 272:14; Igros Moshe, O.C. 2:75.
13. Tzitz Eliezer 8:16; Shemiras Shabbos K’hilchasah 60:5.
14. If a woman refuses to recite Havdalah on her own and there is no one available to recite it for her, her husband (or another man or woman) may repeat it for her, even if he has already fulfilled his obligation earlier; see Mishnah Berurah 296:36; Aruch ha-Shulchan 296:5; Da’as Torah 296:8; Ben Ish Chai, Vayeitzei 22. The blessing over the candle, though, should be omitted, in the opinion of several poskim.
15. O.C. 299:5.
16. Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:91-4; Tzitz Eliezer 8:11.
17. In this case, one should specifically not listen to Havdalah over the phone, since then it may not be repeated for him when the visitor comes.
18. Mishnah Berurah 296:19, 21. Rav Y.S. Elyashiv, too, is quoted (Yad le-Yoledes, pg. 135) as ruling that it is better to eat before Havdalah than to listen to it over the telephone.
19. Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:91-4.
20. Yechaveh Da’as 3:54.

21. See Succah 51b and Tosafos, *ibid*.

22. See Halichos Shelomo 1:22-15.

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Netziv: Davar B'Ito - Parshas Chukas ravadlerstein@torah.org 9:05 AM to netziv

**Netziv: Davar B'Ito
by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**

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Parshas Chukas How To Speak To A Rock! Take the staff and gather the assembly, you and Aharon your brother. Speak to the rock before their eyes that it should give its waters. You shall bring forth water for them from the rock and give drink to the assembly and to their animals.

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 hamikdash. 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 match 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

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STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA The htm version of this shiur is available at: <http://vbm-torah.org/archive/sichot72/39-72chukat.htm> PARASHAT CHUKAT SICHOT OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL ז"ל This week's shiurim are dedicated by Matt Tambor in memory of Abraham Tambor ז"ל It is with a heavy heart that we dedicate this shiur in memory of our alumnus Jeremy Barkan ז"ל who succumbed to cancer after a long and arduous fight. Our thoughts are with his wife Lisa and their children.

"The Torah Was Given to Man" Translated by Kaeren Fish
"When Moshe ascended to the heavens [from Mount Sinai], he heard the voice of the Holy One, blessed be He, discussing the subject of the red heifer, and saying: 'Eliezer, My son, says [i.e., Rabbi Eliezer, in the first mishna in Massekhet Para]: 'To qualify as a para [aduma] it can be no more than two years old; as an eglah [for an eglah arufa] – no more than one year'. Moshe said to God: 'Master of the universe, the upper and lower worlds all belong to You, and yet You declare a halakha in the name of a mortal?!' God replied, 'Moshe, a certain tzaddik is destined to arise in the world, and he is destined to begin [his teachings] with the matter of the red heifer: Rabbi Eliezer says, Para means two years old ... etc.' Moshe said, 'Master of the world, may it be Your will that he be one of my descendants.' God replied, 'By your life, he will be of your progeny.' This is as it is written, 'And the name of the one was Eliezer' (Shemot 18:4) – the name of that special individual was Eliezer." (Yalkut Shimoni, Yitro, 268) It seems that what surprises Moshe is not only that God utters a halakha in the name of a human authority, but rather that He does so specifically in the matter of the red heifer: this is a commandment that is defined as a chok, a Divine decree that makes no sense to human understanding. How, then, does God declare a halakha – specifically in this realm – in the name of Rabbi Eliezer? God's reply is that the Torah is given to man, and man is entrusted with the development of Halakha in all areas – including those whose very essence we do not understand. This idea is expanded upon in the introduction to Ketzot ha-Choshen: "The Torah was not given to the ministering angels. It was given to man, with his human intellect, and the Holy One, blessed be He, gave us the Torah, in His great mercy and kindness, in accordance with the ruling of the human intellect, even though it is not Truth in terms of the superior intelligence..." The Ketzot ha-Choshen explains that man must make rulings and arrive at practical laws of the Torah in accordance with his human intellect, even if what his intellect arrives at does not conform with the absolute, objective Truth. The Ketzot ha-Choshen goes on to quote the Derashot ha-Ran on this subject. The Gemara (Bava Metzi'a 86a) recounts that God and His "heavenly academy" were divided concerning one of the laws of tzara'at, and decided to ask Rava bar Nachmani, who was an expert in the different types of lesions and the laws relevant in each case. The Ran (Derasha 7) raises the obvious question: if God declares a certain lesion pure (i.e., it does not render the person a metzora), then how could anyone disagree? The Ran then explains that God sees the absolute objective Truth, but what establishes Halakha is

human intellect, and therefore Rava was consulted for his opinion. This explains how Rabbi Eliezer was able to arrive at a ruling with regard to the red heifer even though the mitzva makes no sense in terms of our human understanding. Rabbi Eliezer, with his immense intellectual power, was able to rule in these matters – and those rulings are binding, with no need for us to delve into the question of whether or not his rulings represent the objective Truth. This principle is of great importance in the realm of halakhic decision-making, as reflected in the well-known story of the oven of Akhnai: "It was taught there in a mishna: If one dismantles [an oven] into pieces, and then cements the pieces with sand – Rabbi Eliezer declares [the oven] pure, while the Sages declare it impure; this is called the oven of Akhnai. What is [the meaning of] 'Akhnai'? Rav Yehuda said in the name of Shemuel, 'The Sages encircled it with their arguments as a snake (akhna) [winds itself around its prey], and declared it impure.' It was taught: On that day Rabbi Eliezer brought every conceivable argument, but the Sages did not accept his reasoning. He said to them: 'If the halakha is as I maintain, let this carob tree prove it!' At this, the carob tree was uprooted 100 cubits from its place; others say – 400 cubits. They told him: 'One cannot bring proof from a carob tree!' He replied: 'If the halakha is as I maintain – let the aqueduct prove it!' At this, the aqueduct began flowing backwards. They told him: 'One cannot bring proof from an aqueduct.' He replied to them: 'If the halakha is as I maintain – let the walls of the beit midrash prove it!' The walls bent as though about to collapse, whereupon Rabbi Yehoshua scolded them. He said: 'The Sages are engaged in a halakhic dispute; what business is it of yours?!' And so the walls did not collapse – out of respect for Rabbi Yehoshua, but they did not straighten themselves, out of respect for Rabbi Eliezer; they remained thus inclined. Rabbi Eliezer tried once more: 'If the halakha is as I maintain, let the Heavens prove it!' At this, a heavenly voice emerged and said: 'Why do you argue with Rabbi Eliezer, since the Halakha follows his opinion in all matters!' Rabbi Yehoshua stood up and said: 'It is not in Heaven' (Devarim 30:12). What is the meaning of the statement, 'It is not in Heaven'? Rabbi Yirmiyah said: 'The Torah has already been given at Sinai, and therefore we do not pay attention to a Heavenly voice, because You have already written in the Torah at Mount Sinai: 'Incline after the majority' (Shemot 23:2).' Rabbi Natan once met Eliyahu [the prophet] and asked him: 'What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do at that moment?' He replied: 'He laughed and said: My children have defeated Me; My children have defeated Me!' (Bava Metzi'a 59a-b) It is somewhat symbolic that the subject of the disagreement between Rabbi Eliezer and the other Sages is specifically an oven whose pieces are cemented together with sand. This oven looks, to human eyes, like a complete, whole vessel, and therefore the Sages rule that if impure food is placed inside it, the oven is rendered impure. Rabbi Eliezer, on the other hand, with his understanding of the upper worlds as well as our reality, maintains that in God's eyes such a vessel is not considered whole; the criterion for wholeness is a higher principle or ideal, and only something that is originally and essentially whole is judged as such, and thus as able to contract ritual impurity. The story therefore comes to teach us that halakhic rulings are to be made on the basis of our human sight, not in accordance with the way in which they are viewed in God's eyes. When Rabbi Eliezer's uniquely profound and all-encompassing view contradicts the evidence of human eyes, it is not to be followed. The principle of "It is not in the heavens" applies not only to our attitude towards heavenly voices, but to halakhic decision-making in general. And it speaks not only to the intellectual process, but also to the psychological approach towards it. The Chazon Ish writes in one of his letters that when a weeping agunah – a "chained woman" unable to obtain a divorce from her husband – appears before the dayanim, they must not remove her from the court in order that their judgment will not be influenced by her weeping; on the contrary, they should weep along with her, and address her problem in light of that

pain. There is no need for a dayan to sever himself from reality and seek the objective Truth. His ruling must be influenced by reality and by his subjective attitude towards it. This is relevant to us as Torah scholars. Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Hevron, once told me: "The tzaddikim are destroying my yeshiva!" He explained that he was referring to those students who, out of a sense of humility in the face of the Acharonim – the great rabbis of previous generations – were afraid to disagree with their interpretations and to explain the Gemara in a different way. The tremendous intellect and knowledge of the sages of all generations, and their unquestioned authority in halakhic decision-making, must not deter us from questioning and even disagreeing with them. The fact that a certain conclusion makes sense to one person – as great as he may be – does not permit us to accept it unthinkingly. Every person has an obligation to study Torah using his own intellect, and to argue and question until it makes sense to him. Another ramification of this principle is the understanding that the Torah is rational and intelligible to the human mind, not something mystical and far removed from our understanding. The Rambam (Moreh Nevukhim III:31) is sharply critical of those who "have trouble with [the idea of] explaining the reason for any particular mitzva, and prefer the view that one must not try to understand a command or a prohibition at all." He argues that this approach arises from a perception which he calls "a disease of their minds," according to which if we are able to understand the benefit of a certain mitzva, then it becomes something human in our eyes; we will find it difficult to relate to it as a command from God. This view leads to an interesting proposition: "Only something which cannot be understood at all, and has no apparent benefit, can without question be viewed as emanating from God, since human understanding would not produce such an idea." The Rambam believes that this view expresses scorn for the mitzvot and for God, because of its implied conclusion: "[That] it is man who says and does things for a certain purpose, while God does not – He commands us to do things that have no benefit, and prohibits us from doing things that do no harm." The Rambam goes on to address the verse, "... When they hear all these statutes (chukim) they shall say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Devarim 4:6): "For it has already been stated that these statutes all indicate to the nations that they are wise and insightful. If there was a command whose reason could not be known, and which brought no benefit nor did it avoid harm, why would someone who propounded it or acted accordingly be said to be wise and insightful and of great statute, and why would this be held in wonder by the nations?" The Rambam notes that the verse here refers specifically to the statutes (chukim), and hence we deduce that even the chukim have a logic and a reason which we must endeavor to find, until they too become laws that inspire admiration. The Torah was given to us as mortals, and we must view it with mortal eyes and find the benefit in it that is understandable to us as human beings

from: **Rabbi Kaganoff** ymkaganoff@gmail.com reply-to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com date: Sun, Jun 24, 2012 at 7:21 AM subject: parshas Chukas and kosher cheese mailing list: <kaganoff-a.googlegroups.com>

Since a heifer's purity features so prominently in this week's parsha, I thought it an appropriate week to discuss the halachos of manufacturing kosher cheese.

How do we make kosher cheese?

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question: Is there a need for kosher cheese to cost such a premium over non-kosher cheese?

Before discussing the halachic issues involved in manufacturing cheese, we need to explain the basics of cheesemaking. Hashem made cow's milk contain all the nutrients necessary for a newborn calf to grow big and

strong until it is ready to be self-supportive by mowing the lawn – I mean, by eating grass for its nutrition. The major components of milk are lactose, or milk sugar, which provides the carbohydrates a young calf needs; casein and other proteins; cream (which is the fat component); various other nutrients, including calcium for healthy bones; and about 90% water, which keeps the other ingredients in suspension or solution. To make cheese, one causes the casein to precipitate (separate) out of the fluid milk and then to coagulate. The coagulated part of the milk, called the curd, separates from the rest, which is the whey.

What is the prohibition called *gevinas akum*, and why did Chazal prohibit it? The origins of the rabbinic prohibition banning non-Jewish cheese are mentioned by the Mishnah (Avodah Zarah 29b), which records that Rabbi Yehoshua evaded explaining why the Sages prohibited cheese. In actuality, the Mishnah and the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 35) mention seven possible reasons why Chazal prohibited consumption of *gevinas akum*:

(1) The first reason mentioned by the Tanna, Rabbi Yehoshua: Because the gentiles set it using the stomach of a non-kosher slaughtered calf. This approach is later reiterated in the Gemara by Rabbi Yochanan.

(2) The second reason mentioned by Rabbi Yehoshua: Because the gentiles use the stomach of a calf that had been offered for idol worship.

(3) Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: The milk may have been left in a place that snakes could poison it with their venom.

(4) Rabbi Chanina: The milk may have been adulterated with milk of a non-kosher species. Although most non-kosher species do not allow themselves to be milked, camels, donkeys, and mares (female horses) can all be milked and produce palatable product. Although milk from non-kosher species contains very little casein and thus cannot be made into cheese, some fluid remains in the cheese that could contain non-kosher milk.

(5) Rav Ada bar Ahavah: The surface of the cheese may be coated with lard.

(6) Rav Chisda: That non-kosher wine vinegar was used to set the cheese.

(7) Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak: That juice of an orlah fruit may have been used to set the cheese. The Torah (VaYikra 19:23) prohibits eating or benefiting from fruit grown on a tree during its first three years. Those fruits are called *orlah*, and the prohibition of the Torah applies whether the tree was planted by a Jew or a gentile, and whether it grew in Eretz Yisroel or in *chutz la'Aretz*.

The Rambam in his discussion of these laws mentions setting cheese with the juice of figs. Today, we extract an enzyme known as *ficain* (also known as *ficin*), usually from the sap of the fig, which can be, and is, used to make certain varieties of cheese.

As we will soon see, the Rishonim question whether these seven opinions are in dispute – meaning that each authority holds his reason to the exclusion of the others, or that they are each citing a different reason for the prohibition, and that the cheese was prohibited because of any of the reasons.

I want to share with you a curiosity: While researching information for this article, I discovered a forty-year-old article describing how one manufactures cheddar cheese (by the way, the origin of the name is that this cheese was originally developed in Cheddar, a village in England), which reports that the cheese was made by adding calf stomach rennet to the milk so that it curds, heating the curd, going through several processes to carefully remove "every scrap" of whey, pressing the curd and then plunging it into hot water briefly to form a thin rind, and then greasing the rind with pure lard to keep the shape and thicken the rind. Thus, three of the reasons mentioned by the Gemara to prohibit cheese were very much applicable to this cheese – the use of non-kosher rennet; the use of lard; and the remaining uncurded milk in the cheese which could contain adulterated milk, were it not processed so carefully to

remove it all. Obviously, contemporary kosher cheddar cheese must use a different source for the rennet, and a substitute for the lard; but are those the only differences between kosher cheddar and non-kosher?

Why did Rabbi Yehoshua hide the reason? Although we now have some background as to why Chazal prohibited gentile cheese, we have as yet no idea why Rabbi Yehoshua was reticent to explain the origin of the prohibition. However, the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 35a) does explain his concern, in the following passage:

"Why did he not reveal the true reason? As Ula explained: 'When the scholars of Eretz Yisrael decreed a new prohibition, they did not reveal the reason for twelve months -- lest someone dispute their reason and be lax in its observance.'" Thus, we see that even when the prohibition began, no reason was given, out of concern that this might affect whether the takkanah would be properly observed.

We find this issue echoed in a later dispute. In the times of the Rishonim, there were areas of Europe, particularly in Italy and parts of France, where there was a long-established practice to be lenient regarding the consumption of the local cheese of non-Jews. The lenience was based on the fact that the Jews knew the ingredients used by the gentile cheesemakers and that none of the concerns mentioned by the Gemara was germane. The cheese was set with "flowers," some variety of plant-based enzymes. I am told that, to this day, there are cheeses in some parts of Europe which use an enzyme found naturally in a variety of thistle. Perhaps, this was the type of cheese that these communities used.

In any instance, many communities were in the practice of using gentile cheese and found halachic backing for this position. (Several Rishonim quote this lenient position in the name of the Geonei Narvona.) Tosafos quotes Rabbeinu Tam as saying "that we do not find an obvious reason to prohibit gevinas akum." Rabbeinu Tam felt that the different opinions quoted in the Gemara are in dispute, and that the authoritative position for the gezeirah of gevinas akum is that of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi -- that the cheese may be contaminated with snake venom. Rabbeinu Tam then opines that according to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, the prohibition of gevinas akum was never instituted in a place where snakes are not commonly found.

However, most Rishonim rejected this reasoning, contending that the prohibition against gentile cheese exists even when none of the original reasons apply. They contend that the prohibition has a halachic status of *davar shebeminyan*, a rabbinic injunction that remains binding even when the reason the takkanah was introduced no longer applies, until and unless a larger and more authoritative body declares the original injunction invalid. Since a more authoritative *beis din* never rescinded the prohibition on gentile cheese, it remains, even when none of the reasons apply (Rambam, *Maachalos Asuros* 3:4; Rashba, *Toras HaBayis* page 90b; Semag, *Mitzvah* 223; Tur, *Yoreh Deah* 115). Others even contended that Rabbeinu Tam himself never permitted gevinas akum, but that his comments were meant to be theoretical in nature and not a definitive ruling (Semag; Semak).

The Shulchan Aruch rules in line with the majority opinion that there is no halachic basis to allow the practice of the Italian communities which permitted use of the local gentile cheese. The Rama follows a moderately more lenient view, permitting use of gentile cheese only in a place where one can ascertain that there was a long-established custom to permit it. Thus, today no one would be able to use gentile cheese, with the possible exception of an Italian community that can prove that they have such a tradition going back at least eight hundred years.

How is kosher cheese made differently from non-kosher cheese? Having established that almost universal opinion contends that the prohibition against gentile cheese is alive and well even when none of the concerns apply, we need to clarify how one makes cheese in a way that it is considered Jewish cheese, not gentile. Does the cow or the milk

require immersion in a mikveh and acceptance of mitzvos to become Jewish?

To resolve this issue we find a dispute between two major halachic authorities, the Rama (*Yoreh Deah* 215:2) and the Shach. These two authorities dispute concerning the definition of gevinas Yisrael; or, in other terms, what removes a cheese from the categoric prohibition of gevinas akum. To describe the dispute very succinctly, we could say that the Rama contends that supervision makes the cheese kosher, whereas the Shach insists that a Jew must be involved significantly in the processing of the cheese.

A Mashgiach resolves the problem. The Rama contends that a Jew observing the production of cheese makes the cheese gevinas Yisrael, which is, by definition, not subject to the prohibition of gevinas akum. In his opinion, this is true even when the milk and curding agents are all owned by a gentile and even when gentiles performed all the steps in the cheese production.

The Shach takes tremendous issue with this approach of the Rama, contending that if a gentile owns the milk, the acid, and the enzyme, and he places the acid or enzyme into the milk, the resultant cheese is prohibited as gevinas akum, even if an observant Jew supervised the entire production! The Shach rallies support for his position from the wording of the Mishnah, which, when describing the prohibition against *chalav akum*, prohibits milk "milked by a gentile without a Jew watching," whereas when discussing gevinas akum, the Mishnah simply prohibits "the cheese of gentiles," omitting the proviso that a supervising Jew is sufficient to remove the prohibition. According to the Shach, the only whey (or did I mean "way") to avoid gevinas akum is to have a Jew place the curding agent into the milk, or to have the Jew own the milk or the cheese. In these instances, the cheese is now considered "Jewish" cheese, because it was either owned or manufactured by a Jew. The Shabbos Problem Those who followed the Shach's approach requiring the Jew either to make the cheese or to own it, occasionally ran into the following practical problem. In order to make the cheese kosher, they needed to arrange for a Jew to add the enzyme or acid to the milk. This could easily be done if the price was right. If the gentile ordinarily used non-kosher rennet, the Jew would supply his own kosher rennet. However, what was one to do when the gentile decided that the best day to set the cheese was on Shabbos? It is a desecration of Shabbos to add rennet into milk on Shabbos -- and, according to the Shach, a Jew must put in the rennet to avoid a problem of gevinas akum!

This entire problem does not exist according to the Rama, since the Jew can simply oversee the work that the non-Jew is performing. The Jew himself is performing no *melacha*, and the non-Jew does not have to keep Shabbos. Furthermore, no violation of *amira le'nachri*, having a gentile perform *melacha* for a Jew, is involved, since the gentile is working on Shabbos as his own decision and for his own purposes.

The Pri Chodosh, who sides with the Shach's position regarding the dispute concerning what makes a cheese "Jewish," discusses the problem of what to do when the gentile wants to make the kosher cheese on Shabbos. He concludes the following:

If the Jew orders a certain quantity of cheese, the cheese is considered gevinas Yisrael. Since this cheese is being made specifically for the Jew, the Jew is considered the owner as soon as the cheese is manufactured, thus eliminating the prohibition of gevinas akum. This is true even if the Jew did not participate in the manufacture.

The Pri Chodosh also discusses another case: What is the law if the cheese is manufactured as a partnership between the Jew and the gentile? In this situation, must the Jew add the rennet to the milk to avoid a concern of gevinas akum? The Pri Chodosh rules that *lechatchilah* the Jew should add the rennet to consider this cheese kosher, but *be'dei'evid*, if he did not do so, the cheese is permitted, since the Jew is a partial owner.

However, the question is: Why does the Pri Chodosh permit this only be'dei'evid? Logically, this cheese should not be included under the prohibition of gevinas akum, since there is partial Jewish ownership.

It seems that the Pri Chodosh is somewhat concerned because part of the cheese is being made for the gentile – and that quantity of the cheese might be considered gevinas akum – whereas where the Jew is purchasing outright a certain quantity of cheese, whatever is made for the Jew is considered gevinas Yisrael and therefore is permitted.

Another Approach The Noda BiYehudah (II Orach Chayim #37) discusses a similar case, where a Jew is "renting the schvag" of a non-Jew for the purpose of producing cheese. I do not know the meaning of the word schvag, and in many inquiries about the subject I have found no one else who knows either, but from the context in which the Noda BiYehudah uses the term, it seems that this was a Slavic word for a cheese factory. The case is that the Jew is paying the gentile to use his own facility to produce cheese for the Jew. Again, the Noda BiYehudah is faced by the same problem that the Pri Chodosh discussed: What should one do on Shabbos?

The Noda BiYehudah sides with the Rama: as long as the Jew supervises the process, the cheese is kosher, mentioning that this is the accepted practice, and that several earlier luminaries ruled this way.

In addition, the Noda BiYehudah demonstrates that the dispute between the Rama and the Shach originates as a machlokes Rishonim in which most authorities rule like the Rama, whereas the Maharam of Rottenberg held, like the Shach, that gevinas akum applies unless the Jew is the owner or the manufacturer.

The Noda BiYehudah adds the following point. He contends that when the Jew intends to purchase the cheese and also supplies the rennet, the Jew is already considered the owner of the cheese. Under these circumstances, there is no problem of gevinas akum, even according to the Maharam and the Shach. The Noda BiYehudah concludes that, under these circumstances, a gentile may himself actually produce the cheese without it becoming prohibited. Whereas the Pri Chodosh (115:15) permitted consuming cheese produced this way only be'dei'evid, that is, if it has been produced already, the Noda BiYehudah rules that lechatchilah one may produce kosher cheese this way. Owning just the rennet Based on the explanation of the Noda BiYehudah, some contemporary rabbonim have suggested that it is sufficient for the Jew to own the rennet. Others take issue with this approach, contending that this is sufficient only when the cheese is being produced specifically for Jewish consumption, whereas in the modern world, the cheese is usually produced for general consumption, and the non-Jewish company intends to market the cheese. According to the Orthodox Union Kashruth Division, Rav Yisrael Belsky rules that the Noda BiYehudah permitted only a situation when the Jews rented the cheese-plant and planned on purchasing the finished cheeses. The Noda BiYehudah contended that owning the rennet suffices to give the Jew a partial ownership in the cheese when it is a first step towards taking full possession. However, when the Jew now has no intention of ever owning the cheese, this approach is insufficient to create gevinas Yisrael.

Other rabbonim ruled that if the Jew owns the milk and the rennet, then the cheese produced is gevinas Yisrael according to all opinions. Subsequent to its production, the gentile then purchases the cheese back from the Jew, so that he markets it as his own cheese. However, I know of responsible, knowledgeable rabbonim who permitted cheese based on this heter, usually adding other requirements. For example, in one instance the rav made a kinyan on the factory and all its vessels, so that he would own the cheese as it was made. Another suggestion was that the rav remain a partial owner of the cheese as it was made, and that he sell his share in the finished cheese, after its manufacture was complete, back to the company in exchange for his "hechsher fee."

Conclusion The Gemara teaches that the rabbinic laws are dearer to Hashem than the Torah laws. In this context, we can explain the vast

halachic literature devoted to understanding the prohibition of gevinas akum, created by Chazal to protect the Jewish people from various different sins. We should always hope and pray that the food we eat fulfill all the halachos that the Torah commands us.

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network shemalist@shemayisrael.com to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Jun 28, 2012 at 6:20 AM subject:

Peninim on the Torah

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Chukas

mailing list: peninim_shemayisrael.com. shemayisrael.com Filter messages from this mailing list mailed-by: shemayisrael.com Shema Yisrael Torah Network shemalist@shemayisrael.com 6:20 AM (16 hours ago) to Peninim PARSHAS CHUKAS

This is the decree of the Torah... and they shall take to you a completely red cow. (19:2) Chazal describe the laws concerning the Parah Adumah, Red Cow, as the quintessential chukas haTorah, decree of the Torah. A chok is a mitzvah whose rationale defies human logic. This does not mean that it is beyond reason; rather, its reason is beyond our human grasp, due to our limited intellect. What makes this law the paradigmatic chok? Chazal say that it is specifically concerning the law of Parah Adumah that Satan and the nations of the world taunt us, asking, "What is the purpose of this commandment?" Our reply, of course, is, "It is a chok. Its reason is beyond us." To this, they will certainly counter, "Are you people insane? How do you accept to perform a law which you do not understand?"

Let us explain this dialogue further. After all, in the eyes of the gentile world and even among many secular co-religionists, we do come across as slightly unbalanced. Horav Naftali Tzvi, zl, m'Ropshitz, explains that performing mitzvos that are rational appeals to the majority of people. They may neither have faith in a Supreme Being, nor believe in the concept of schar v'onesh, reward and punishment, but mitzvah performance on a tit-for-tat rational basis, is something to which they can relate. After all, it does make sense. These mitzvos are either morally righteous or based on historical tradition commemorating a miraculous event. Even if the individual believes that the event may not have taken place and is nothing more than a figment of the religious observer's overactive imagination, he can still respect the reasoning for the observance. To perform a mitzvah that does not make sense, however, simply because it is the will of a Higher Being, whom they neither have even seen nor do they believe exists, is carrying it a bit too far. The people who perform these mitzvos must be insane.

Alternatively, there is another reason for their overwhelming commitment: love. They have a deep, powerful, loving bond with G-d. When we carry out the Parah Adumah ritual, Satan and the gentiles think that we are off the wall. It just does not make sense. It provokes them to anger. How dare we believe that there is a Hashem Who commanded us to do this? How dare we claim that our love for Hashem is boundless and that we will do whatever He asks of us?

Well, this love has been carrying our People for thousands of years. To rationalize chukim would be to minimize the love that we have for Hashem. We need no answers or excuses to serve Hashem. It is all in the love that He has for us - and that we reciprocate to Him.

Horav Yaakov Kaminetzky, zl, explains that this is why Hashem gave us the mitzvah of Parah Adumah in Marah prior to our receiving the Torah. It is as if Parah Adumah is a primer for the entire Torah, a preface to Jewish life from a Torah perspective. The relevance of the Parah Adumah is to tumah v'taharaah, the complexities of ritual purity and contamination, which did not go into effect until after the Mishkan was built. Why did the Torah mention these laws now?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that Hashem was teaching us a fundamental lesson concerning His commandments: they do not have to be reconciled with human logic. The Torah is Divinely authored; the mitzvos are Divinely-given. They are Hashem's decree. This is all we have to know. To receive the Torah is to accept it on these terms. This, of course, does not preclude one from developing a profound understanding of Torah and seeking to analyze its aspects and plumb its profundities. We must only understand that even when what the Torah says "makes sense" to us, it does not mean that the Torah requires our stamp of approval. It is Hashem's decree, His will, and that is all we have to know - and accept.

In his Sefer HaMitzvos Asei 3, the Rambam writes that Jewish outreach to the unaffiliated is part of the mitzvah of Ahavas Hashem. To love Hashem is to bring more Jews into the fold, to bring them beneath kanfei haShechinah, the wings of the Divine Presence. "V'ahavta es Hashem Elokecha, "And you shall love Hashem, Your G-d" (Devarim 6:5). How does one express his love for Hashem? Among his answers, Rambam writes: "Reach out to as many people as possible and draw them closer to G-d, to inspire them to serve Him, and have faith in Him."

This idea is pure common sense. If one has a friend whom he admires greatly, he wants to share this knowledge with as many people as possible. By publicly singing his friend's praises, he garners support for him. Indeed, he does not rest as long as others do not recognize his friend's worth. A true friend does not isolate his friend from others. Otherwise, this indicates that the only one whom he really cares for is himself. Furthermore, one who loves Hashem is deeply hurt and upset that others do not see it the way he does, that an unknowing Jewish world does not appreciate Hashem's eminence and boundless kindness.

In his volume, *With Hearts full of Faith*, Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, observes that when a person embarks on the journey of Jewish outreach in its various forms, motivated by his deep love for Hashem, a sincere desire to elevate His glory, and an innate and profound compassion for His children, the Jewish People, there is no limit to what he might achieve. In addition, there is no ceiling to the *zechuyos*, merits, he can amass.

The *Mashgiach* relates an incredible story concerning a Rosh Yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael, who is himself a well-known baal teshuvah, penitent. He is a respected talmid chacham, Torah scholar, whose family is a model for a Torah home, and whose children are exemplary standards of *bnei* and *bnos* Torah, refined and learned, who possess superior character traits and moral demeanor. This Rosh Yeshivah has himself mentored many disciples, many of whom have themselves successfully reached out to others. This individual is, indeed, the paradigm of the heights that Torah life can help a person to attain.

This Rosh Yeshiva had not, however, always been on this elevated spiritual perch. He grew up on an anti-religious kibbutz. Indeed, anything Torah oriented was an anathema to him. He lived a life engrossed in pleasure, having tasted and satiated himself with every forbidden pleasure. Life was for enjoying - and he was doing his royal part in seeing his goals achieve fruition. At the age of eighteen, he decided that he would leave no pleasure ignored. He would try it all! One day, he heard that in Haifa a certain establishment catered to pleasure seekers. It was a place where one's wildest dreams could be sadly realized. He was going there! After all, what was to prevent him from self-indulging in the physical gratification that was being offered?

For all intents and purposes, he should have plummeted down the spiral of depression to which so many teenagers whose alienation from Torah prevents their development of a meaningful, inspirational Jewish life. He did not. Indeed, his life made a 180-degree turn, setting in motion the upward climb from the depths to the peak of the mountain. What happened?

As he was about to enter the house of illicit pleasure, with its neon sign beckoning to those in need of satisfying their prurient desires, he noticed a religious Jew walking by the establishment. As the fellow caught sight of the immodest sign signaling the debased nature of this edifice, he instantly turned his head away, raising his hand to shield his eyes.

The young kibbutznik was shocked. How could someone in his "right" mind ignore the pleasures being offered? Was this religious Jew normal? Must be, he conjectured, that this fellow was privy to an even greater pleasure than that being offered at this place. If so - I want it too! This is the pleasure that I seek. At that moment, without much fanfare, he turned around and enrolled in a yeshivah. He never left, because he had discovered the greatest pleasure on earth: Torah! The rest is history.

Rav Matisyahu observes that, while the episode is quite interesting and inspiring, there is an aspect that we tend to overlook: the religious Jew who walked by and shielded his eyes. One day, this fellow would pass on to his eternal reward. He would be standing before the Heavenly Tribunal waiting to be "processed." His sins will be placed on one side of the scale, while his merits will go on the opposite side of the scales of Justice. As he watches the merits being piled on, truckloads and truckloads of merits will be dropped off, and he will become confused: "Who are all of these children that are my merit? I never met a single one of them. Where did all of these mitzvos come from?"

"Do you remember that day in Haifa, when you turned your head away in order to avoid seeing an advertisement describing the forbidden pleasures to be had within the building?"

"Vaguely" will be the reply.

"Well, at that moment, a secular Jew walked by and was inspired by your action. He changed his life and, in turn, inspired others to go the Torah way. They are all considered 'yours.' You are being rewarded for their spiritual success." This is a case in which "a little bit of love" generated a love of love, such that many hundreds of Jews and countless mitzvos are the result of that single Jew expressing his love for Hashem by shielding his eyes from sin.

This is the teaching regarding a man who will die in a tent. (19:14)

Chazal's exegesis on the pasuk, "This is the teaching regarding a man who will die in a tent," is well-known. The "tent" is a reference to the *ohalah*, tent, of Torah. We

are being taught that Torah is retained only in a person who is willing to die for it. Torah study is not a course which one passes or fails. It is our lifeline to Judaism; thus, only an individual who understands its intrinsic value and is willing to give everything up for it, can acquire it. He realizes that everything which he has is really of no value without Torah.

When one analyzes Chazal's interpretation of the pasuk we wonder how the *pschat*, simple translation, and the *d'rash*, homiletic interpretation of the *pschat*, can be so far apart. The pasuk addresses a person who becomes *tamei*, ritually unclean, to a corpse, which is the *avi avos ha'tumah*, the primary source of all ritual impurity; yet, Chazal "ignore" this and interpret the pasuk as addressing the zenith of Torah learning and the individual who reaches this apex. How do we reconcile the *pschat* with the *drash*?

Horav Aviezer Piltz, Shlita, Rosh Yeshivas Tifrach, explains that, actually, the two complement one another quite well. The Rosh Yeshivah first addresses the reason that *tumaas adam*, the ritual impurity of man, exceeds that of all other creations. Even within the category of human, we find that halachah distinguishes between the *tumah* of a ben Yisrael and that of an *akum*, gentile. *Atem keruyim adam v'ein umos ha'olam kruyin adam*, "Only you (Klal Yisrael) are considered (under the purview) *adam*, man, and not the nations of the world." Why does a Jewish corpse have greater ritual impurity than that of a gentile?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that when Hashem created man, He gathered *adamah*, earth, from all corners of the world. From this conglomerate of earth, man was formed. Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, quotes Chazal who say that man has within him all of the innate qualities of the forces of evil that comprise the DNA of all of the world's creatures. Therefore, man is a composite of all of the creatures that were formed before him. Man's purpose is to purify himself, thereby harnessing all of these forces within him, transforming them from bad to good, from impure to holy. Man is able to do this as long as he lives, allowing for his holy *neshamah*, soul, to guide this process. When the *neshamah* leaves a person, leaving only his mortal remains, immediately the *kochos ha'tumah*, forces of impurity, prevail. Thus, man - the composite of all that preceded him - becomes the greatest source of *tumah*, because he has every *tumah* within him.

We now understand the relationship between Chazal's exegesis and the *pschat* of the pasuk. The purpose of *adam*, man, is to sanctify his *chumrios*, physicality, earthliness, by *yamus b'ohel*, "killing" himself in the tent of Torah. This compelling purpose and concomitant responsibility give rise to the fact that man's *tumah* is greater than that of any other creature. Furthermore, since a Jew's *tumah* is the result of his overriding *kedushah*, holiness, his *tumah* is greater than that of a gentile, whose *tumah* is not the result of *kedushah*.

This, suggests Rav Piltz, explains why Rav Chaim Kohen, quoted by Tosfos in Kesubos 103b, declared that had he been in attendance when the saintly Rabbeinu Tam, leader of the French Tosafists, died, he would have had no qualms concerning becoming *tamei* to him. The great *tzaddikim* have succeeded in eradicating whatever physicality was within them. Thus, their mortal remains are not a source of *tumah*. The ritual impurities must gravitate and cling to something. The *tzaddik* has been expunged of all physicality.

This is the teaching regarding a man who will die in a tent. (19:14)

The Talmud *Yevamos* 60b teaches that one who is exposed to the human remains of a gentile does not become *tamei*, ritually unclean, through *tumas ohel*, exposure by being in an enclosure or under the same roof as human remains. A gentile only renders one *tamei* through *tumaas maga*, actual physical contact, with the corpse. In explanation, Chazal offer that the Torah emphasizes the word, "*adam*," man. Only a Jew has the distinction of being called an *adam*. Tosfos add that, while a gentile is referred to as *ha'adam*, the man, with the *hay ha'yediah*, the letter *hay* which denotes distinction, he is still not referred to as *adam*. This causes one to wonder. Adding the prefix *hay* singles out the subject, adding deference to it. Thus, *ha'adam* means the man, the special man. If so, why are non-Jews referred to by a title which is seemingly more laudatory than that given to the Jew?

Horav Avigdor HaLevi Nebentzhal, Shlita, quotes Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl, who explains that the word *adam*, which is used to describe all human beings, has a dual connotation. *Adam* can be derived from *adamah*, earth, alluding to man's earthly roots. Another connotation is that man is *adameh l'Elyon*, "I will liken myself to the most high" (*Yeshayah* 14:14), which is reference to man's creation *b'tzelem Elokim*, in the image of G-d. We now have two aspects to man: his relationship to the earth; his aspiration for G-dliness, his ability to liken himself in some way to the Divine by following in His ways.

Rav Nebentzhal explains that the *adam* which relates to the Heavenly aspect of man, the *adameh l'Elyon*, his creation in G-d's image, cannot have the prefix *hay* before it, since it is a verb, describing man's ability to elevate himself. The *hay ha'yediah* does not apply a conjunction into a verb - only with a noun. It is only

concerning that aspect of man's connection with the physical earth that the prefix hay may be used.

Thus, only Klal Yisrael may be called (plain) adam, which signifies our connection to Hashem and aspirations to achieve spiritual eminence. The umos ha'olam, nations of the world, are called ha'adam with the added prefix. This designates their earthly origin. Only Klal Yisrael is called adam, for only they have been created with a Heavenly focus imbued in their DNA.

And Miriam died there. (20:1)

Rashi notes the juxtaposition of Miriam's passing upon the parshah of Parah Adumah, the Red Cow. He explains that, just as the Parah Adumah ritual atones, so does missas tzaddikim, the death of the righteous, atone. In his commentary to the Talmud Moed Kattan 28a, Rabbeinu Chananel writes: "Just as Parah Adumah purifies sins and is thus called a Chatas (Poras Chatas), and every Korban Chatas, sin-offering, cleanses one's sins, likewise, the passing of nashim tzidkaniyos, righteous women, purifies and atones for Klal Yisrael's sins." This is an amazing statement ascribing Chatas status to the passing of righteous women. If the point of emphasis is to underscore the Chatas aspect of Parah Adumah, why did the Torah not position Miriam's passing next to the laws of Korban Chatas? Why juxtapose it upon Parah Adumah, which is only referred to as a Chatas? Why not designate it next to the source - the parshah of korbanos?

In his Bad Kodesh, Horav Baruch Dov Povarsky, Shlita, explains the nature of the avodas ha'parah, Parah Adumah ritual, distinguishing it from avodas ha'korbanos, the ritual of offering sacrifices on the Mizbayach. The preparation, slaughter and ensuing offering of a korban is carried out b'fanim, within the confines of the Sanctuary. This is unlike the Parah Adumah protocol which is executed bachutz, outside the Bais Hamikdash, on Har HaMishchah. Nonetheless, the Parah Adumah is called a Chatas. Why?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that the Parah Adumah is prepared in the eastern end of Yerushalayim on Har HaMishchah opposite the Heichal, which is in the eastern portion of the Bais Hamikdash. Despite the fact that the entire process is carried out outside of the Sanctuary, since it is performed facing the Ohel Moed, it develops the kedushah, sanctity, of a Korban Chatas.

In other words, the only commonality between the Parah Adumah and a Chatas is the fact that the Parah Adumah is prepared facing the Ohel Moed where the Chatas is prepared. We derive from here that kedushah, holiness, extends beyond the parameters of the Bais Hamikdash - as long as the ritual being performed faces and is focused on the Mikdash.

Avodas ha'korbanos, the sacrificial service, is male-oriented, performed by zichrei Kehunah, male Kohanim. Furthermore, the substitute services, such as tefillah, prayer, and Torah study which are today's replacement for the Temple service, are also primarily male-oriented. There is no public women's service as there is for men. Women study Torah, but it is not of the same genre as men. Women have never been included in the sacrificial service or in its modern-day, post Bais Hamikdash replacement. What, then, is their segulah, merit? On what is the term nashim tzidkaniyos based?

It is in the merit of acting in support of their husbands and sons, as they learn Torah. A wife and mother's assistance, support, sustenance - their facing towards the male-oriented Torah learning - is what grants them the distinction and earns them a right to share in their merit.

This is the lesson imparted by the juxtaposition of Miriam's passing upon the laws of Parah Adumah. The Parah Adumah atoned like a Korban Chatas, because it was prepared facing and concentrating on the place where the Chatas was prepared. Likewise, women whose lives are riveted on their husband's and sons' Torah advancement earn their merit. After all, was it not Rabbi Akiva who said, concerning his wife, Torasi v'Torashchen shelah hee, "My Torah and your Torah is (actually) hers"?

They wept for Aharon for thirty days, the entire House of Yisrael. (20:29)

Aharon HaKohen merited an unprecedented outpouring of grief. Rashi explains that this is attributed to Aharon's relationship with the entire nation - men and women alike. He was a man who pursued peace and attempted to heal any fissure that erupted between friends, family, husband and wife. This contrasts the mourning for Moshe Rabbeinu concerning whom the Torah writes, "And Bnei Yisrael wept for Moshe" (Devarim 34:8). It does not say, "The entire House of Yisrael," as it says concerning Aharon. Moshe was the nation's leader and, as such, had to mete out justice and discipline when necessary. This does not usually win friends and supporters - especially among the simple-minded.

The principle upon which shalom bayis, peace and harmony, within a household is founded, is in the koach ha'nesinah, power of giving. In his Michtav Mei'Eliyahu, Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl, distinguishes between two types of people: the nosein, giver; and the noteil, taker. The faculty of giving is a sublime power. Indeed, it is one of the attributes of the Creator, Who is the consummate giver. He

takes nothing in return for all that He gives, for He lacks nothing. Having been created in Hashem's image, man possesses this middah, attribute, which enables him to be merciful, to bestow happiness and to give of himself.

Regrettably, the flip side should not be ignored: The trait of taking, through which a person aspires to draw to himself everything that comes his way. We call it selfish or egotistical when a person thinks only of himself. Rav Dessler considers this to be the root of all evil. Furthermore, there is no middle road. One is either a nosein or a noteil. Every person is devoted, at the deepest level of his personality, to one or the other of the two positions; in the innermost longings of his heart, he can brook no compromise.

Love flows in the direction of giving. Rav Dessler cites Chazal in Meseches Derech Eretz Zuta: "If you want to keep close to the love of your friend, make it your concern to seek his welfare." This takes us to the relationship between husband and wife. Husband and wife together complement one another, filling in for any flaw which might exist in one's spouse. By giving each other this sheleimus, completion, they come to love one another. This affection will, in turn, generate more giving - with each one seeking to bestow happiness and pleasure on the other.

Rav Dessler would say to a young couple on their yom chasunah, wedding day, "Filling your hearts at this moment is a wondrous desire to give pleasure and happiness to each other. Take care, my dear ones, that you strive to always maintain this desire as fresh and strong as it is at the present time. You should know that the moment you find yourselves beginning, instead, to make demands upon each other, your happiness is at an end."

In summation: the optimal relationship between husband and wife will be realized when both achieve and practice the virtue of giving. Then their affection will never cease, and their lives will be filled with happiness and contentment for as long as they live.

Rav Dessler was a naeh doreish v'naeh mekayeim, practiced what he preached. He was the consummate husband and father. The following episode is related by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita. It is well-known that there are two shiurim, measurements, for the kos shel yayin, wine cup, used for Kiddush. There is the large size, which is in accordance with the Chazon Ish, and a smaller size. During his entire marriage to Rebbetzin Dessler, Rav Dessler used the smaller cup. On the Shabbos following her passing, he asked to make Kiddush on a cup in accordance with the shiur of the Chazon Ish. When asked to explain his new practice, he said, "During my wife's lifetime, I made Kiddush on the cup she brought from her father's home - despite the fact that it was of the lesser size. It was my way of according her respect. Now, I am certain she will not take offense." Rav Dessler was willing to yield on his personal observance out of respect for his wife. Is there a more propitious way to ensure marital harmony?

Ohr chadash al tzion tair. May You shine a new light on Tzion.

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, explains that this "new" light is in fact the original light of Vayehi or, "And there was light," the light of Maasei Bereishis, Creation. Hashem saw that this light was "good"; He separated this light from darkness. Chazal explain that this separation was catalyzed because Hashem felt that the light was too precious to be used by evil people. Thus, he put it aside for the use of tzaddikim, the righteous, in Olam Habba, the World to Come. We now ask that this original light be returned to this world with the advent of the geulah, redemption, and the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

Each month, as we recite Kiddush Levanah, blessing over the new moon, we note that the constant renewal of the moon-cycle is an allusion to Hashem's renewing our relationship with Him, thereby returning the Or HaShechinah to this world. The moon has been the Jewish People's symbol of hope ever since the mitzvah of Kiddush Ha'Chodesh was given to us as we left Egypt. It is the first mitzvah of the Torah. I think this teaches us something. This is a mitzvah given specifically to generate hope within our hearts. We have survived the vicissitudes of history due to our emunah, faith in Hashem, and hope that the day of our ultimate redemption will soon come. We look forward to this daily, as we express our yearning for an end to our misery and the return of the Or HaShechinah. Now, if we would only think about this as we articulate the words...

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