

ISSUE #41

ז' תמוז תשפ"ד
13/7/24



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת חקת

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. קַח אֶת הַמַּטֵּה וְהִקְהֵל אֶת הָעֵדָה אֹתָהּ וְאַהֲרֹן אַחִיךָ, וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֶּלַע לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיַּמִּי, וְהוֹצֵאתָ לָהֶם מִיַּם מִן הַסֶּלַע וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אֶת הָעֵדָה וְאֶת בְּעִירָם וְכו'. וַיִּרְם מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת הַסֶּלַע בְּמַטְהוֹ פַּעַמִּים וַיֵּצְאוּ מִיַּם רַבִּים וַתִּשְׁתְּ הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן, יַעַן לֹא הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת הַקְּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם. (במדבר כ, ז-יב)

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "Take the staff and gather together the assembly, you and Ahron your brother, and you shall speak to the rock before their eyes and it shall give its waters. You shall bring forth for them water from the rock and give drink to the assembly and their animals" ... Then Moshe raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff twice; abundant water came forth and the assembly and their animals drank. Hashem told Moshe and Ahron, "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of Klal Yisroel, therefore, you will not bring this congregation to the Land that I have given them." (Bamidbar 20:7-12)

This week's *Sidrah* tells the story of how, after the death of Miriam, there was a shortage of water which caused Klal Yisroel to complain to Moshe and Ahron. Hashem instructed Moshe to speak to the rock, which would then provide water for the people to drink. Moshe, accompanied by Ahron, gathered the entire assembly and successfully drew water from a rock. However, Moshe did not honour Hashem, at least in the way and to the degree to which he had been commanded. The exact nature of his sin is puzzling and is variously interpreted by the Meforshim. Regardless, this sin prevented Moshe and Ahron from entering Eretz Yisroel with the rest of the nation.

Simply understood, Hashem commanded Moshe: **וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֶּלַע לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיַּמִּי** – *and speak to the rock before their eyes that it shall give its waters*. Moshe was supposed to speak to the rock and request that it give forth water. The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* cites the Mayim Tehorim, who offers a new interpretation of these words, providing fresh insight into the episode of the Mei Merivah.

The Mayim Tehorim begins by explaining the difference between **אֲמִירָה** and **דִּבּוּר**. These words may seem similar as they both refer to speech, but there is a fundamental difference. **אֲמִירָה** is when someone tells something to another person, without the other person's involvement. On the other hand, **דִּבּוּר** indicates a conversation and discussion between two parties, where each party is involved in the matter being discussed. When you speak *to* somebody, it does not require input from the listener, but when you talk *with* somebody, it denotes a dialogue between two participants. He uses various references from *pessukim* and Chazal to illustrate the significance of this change in terminology.

Our *possuk* uses the term **וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֶּלַע** which connotes speaking *with* somebody, which seems strange concerning a rock! To explain this, one must clarify that there was a dialogue between two people *by* the rock, which can be understood based on an interesting Midrash. The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni) explains that Moshe was to learn a portion of Torah or *halachah* by the rock. Accordingly, Hashem's command to Moshe was to "speak in learning" with Ahron by the rock and this would cause water to flow from the rock. The phrase, **וְנָתַן מִיַּמִּי** is not, as simply understood, part of the directive

to command the rock to give water; rather, Moshe was instructed to speak in learning *by* the rock with the result being - וַיִּתֵּן מִיָּמָיו - *the water will flow*.

With this explanation, we can gain further insight into the lack of Kiddush Hashem for which Moshe and Ahron were held accountable and punished. Rashi explains that if they had spoken to the rock and it had brought forth water, Hashem's Name would have been sanctified before the eyes of the people, as they would have drawn a *kal v'chomer* from it. They would have said, "Now if this rock, which neither speaks nor hears and does not need subsistence, fulfils the word of Hashem, how much more so should we fulfil His word."

According to the above understanding, this lesson can be viewed from a new dimension. If the nation had witnessed water gushing forth from a rock simply due to being in proximity of Torah being discussed, this would have created a phenomenal lesson as to the power of Torah. The people would have observed a powerful illustration of the impact and strength of Torah, which would have brought honour to Hashem and made a lasting impression.

This concept is echoed in the words of the Chovos HaLevavos (*Sh. HaBechina* 4) who compares the relationship between nature and the Torah to that of a servant and his master. The laws of nature only exist according to the will of Torah as stated in the *possuk* (*Shemos* 23:25): וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וּבֵרַךְ אֶת לַחֲמֶךָ וְאֶת מִימֶיךָ, וְהִסְרֵתִי מִקִּרְבְּךָ *You shall serve Hashem, your G-d, and He shall bless your bread and your water, and I shall remove illness from your midst.*

We further find in Chazal that this lesson was constantly taught to Klal Yisroel when they were in the desert relying on water from the well. The Midrash (*Tanna D'Bei Eliyohu* 12) tells us that when the people were fulfilling the will of Hashem, the well would provide water near their dwellings. However, when their behaviour was not righteous, the water supply could be delayed for several hours until the Talmidei Chachomim and young children (who were free from sin) would come and request it, as mentioned in the *possuk* (21:17): עֲלֵי בְּאֵר, "Come up, O well!"

This remarkable Midrash conveys to us an incredible message as to the power of Torah. Just being in the vicinity of Torah being learnt could have produced a miracle, like water gushing from a rock! This teaches us to appreciate and recognise the incredible power and potency of Torah and how it can bless us beyond the ordinary rules of nature!

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל עה"ת and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@gyalumni.org.