

- * There will be a shiur at Mark Franck's house (Gemorah Brachos) @ 3:50pm on Shabbos afternoon.
- * There will be a kiddush this shabbos in the main shule, to celebrate the affruf of Jack Zacks & Sharona Goldman.
ALL are invited to attend.

Katanga

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Caulfield
Beth Hamedrash Weekly Newsletter

D'var Torah

“DIFFERENT STROKES...”

by Rabbi Shraga Simmons

This week's Parsha features one of the most perplexing incidents in the entire Torah. The instruction to "speak" to the rock in this week's Parsha is in contrast to 40 years earlier, when Moses followed God's instruction to HIT the rock.

This time, Moses is to speak. Yet he again hits the rock. Nothing happens, so Moses hits the rock again, and water comes out - "since you HIT the rock rather than speaking to it, you will not lead the Jewish people into the Land of Israel" (Numbers 20:11-12).

We read this story and think: Here's the mighty Moses, who confronted Pharaoh, arranged the Ten Plagues, split the Red Sea, brought the Torah down from Mount Sinai, and defended the people through trials and tribulations in the desert. Now he makes one little mistake and God takes away his dream of entering Israel. The consequence seems inappropriately harsh!

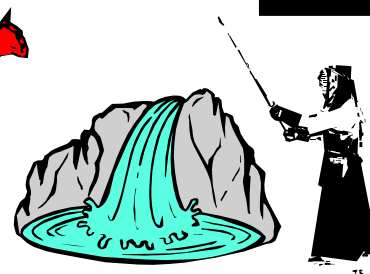
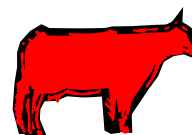
The first step in understanding this incident is to appreciate how the Jewish people were at the critical juncture of transitioning from desert life to Israel. At the rock, God's instructions to Moses are carefully chosen to reflect this transition. Forty years earlier, when Moses was told to HIT the rock, the people had just come out of brutal slavery in Egypt - and "hitting" was a language they understood. But this time, Moses was called upon to lead a generation who'd grown up in freedom; a generation which required the softer approach of "speaking."

Notice how in our Parsha, Moses hits the rock twice. First, he hit the rock and no water came out. At that moment he had the opportunity to re-evaluate his approach and reflect more carefully on God's specific instruction to "speak." But Moses hits the rock again.

The commentators suggest that perhaps symbolically, we can learn about our own need to be flexible in our approach. Moses' punishment is not harsh; it is simply a consequence of his relationship to the new generation and their needs in entering Israel.

We learn from this a crucial lesson about education. King Solomon says: "Educate each child according to his own way." The process of learning is different for everybody, and the approach that's effective for one is often not effective for another.

Jewish ideals have existed against all odds for 3,000 years - not because we've pounded people over the



head, but because we've communicated those ideas in a rational, practical way.

It is interesting that the experience of Moses in the desert can be understood in light of the experience of Judaism in the 20th century. In the shtetl of Europe, a rabbi might be able to communicate displeasure to his students by hitting the knuckles with a ruler. It was a language that was accepted and understood. But when tens of thousands of Jews moved to America, those who sent their children to Jewish day school found these same rabbis applying their European-style methods to children with American mentalities. These children, who were used to a more open and permissive approach, could not relate to Judaism as it was being presented. The result is that many of them shifted away from observance.

It has only been in the last 20 years - with American-born rabbis now taking the helm and explaining Judaism in modern, relevant terms - that American Jewry has seen a resurgence back toward traditional observance.

Berel Wein writes:

"In our always-uncertain world, it is natural to crave security and stability. Financial planners, estate planners, insurance experts and politicians in office all attempt to convince us that the way it is now is how it will be in the future as well. However, all of us in our secret hearts know that the only thing certain about the future is that it will not be the same as the present. Therefore, we should be prepared to be open to new circumstances, to a constantly changing world. We should not be afraid to try out new technology, new ideas and theories, to change careers and pursue our true interests and goals. There is an innate longing for greatness within all of us. That longing can never be fulfilled without a willingness to change, improve and try something new."

Like Moses and the rock, our ability to adjust and customise our approach - while remaining true to Torah standards - will in large part determine how successfully we move our children, our students, our nation and ourselves forward into the "Land of Israel" - into the next exciting stage of personal and national destiny.

Thoughts for the week:

"Failure is when one stops trying, not when one doesn't succeed."

"A wise man's question is half the answer." (Mivchar Peninim)

"The only safe and sure way to destroy an enemy is to make him your friend." (Abraham Lincoln)

"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle."

"I think animal testing is a terrible idea; they get all nervous and give the wrong answers."

Other Developments

* After shule on shabbos, Jack Zacks quoted the Gemorah which teaches that a person's true nature is exposed through a few things: money, drink, anger and laughter ("Kees, Kose, Kas and Tzchok"). He then proceeded to describe Korach's behaviour in terms of these attributes. Korach had spent vast sums of money to cause Moshe humiliation in front of entire Bnei Yisrael for his own enjoyment. Furthermore, the underlying cause of his rebellion was financial self interest - as he was not destined to receive a portion of the land upon entrance to Israel. Yasher Koach.

* Last week the Shul enjoyed a kiddush by Mr & Mrs Tom May and Mr & Mrs Abe Muchnik in honour of their respective yortzheits.

MAZAL TOV!

A A very hearty Mazal Tov to Jack Zacks and Sharona Goldman on the occasion of their affruf this week.

A Katanga would like to wish the happy couple, their parents and extended families much naches and simchas in the future.

Love of the Land

by Raabi Mendel Weinbach

Enough To Be Thankful For

This is the title of the most popular song of the Passover Seder in which we enumerate the historical kindness bestowed on our people by our Creator. After mentioning each kindness, from the Exodus from Egypt to the building of the Beis Hamikdash, we declare in melodic fashion that any one of them would have been enough for us (Dayenu) to be thankful for.

The final pair of this long list is arranged in a pattern which teaches an important lesson in our scale of values:

"Had He given us the Torah and not brought us into Eretz Yisrael - it would have been enough."

Torah without Eretz Yisrael is a viable formula for the fulfillment of our identity as a chosen people. For thousands

Announcements

- Please join us for our Katanga weekly Squash game on Sundays @ 6pm and 7pm at Albert Park. If you are interested in attending, please let Yirmie Elkus know.

Parsha Overview – Chukas

The Parsha details the laws of the Para Aduma (red heifer) for ritual purification of one who comes into contact with death. After nearly 40 years in the desert, Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. The water supply which had been provided miraculously in her merit ceases and the people complain. Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon to gather the nation at Merivah and speak to a designated rock so that water will flow forth. Distressed by the people's lack of faith, Moshe hits the rock and Hashem tells them that they will not bring the people into the Land. Bnei Yisrael resume their travels. When they reach Mount Hor, Aharon dies and his son Elazar is invested with his priestly garments and responsibilities. Aharon was beloved by all, and the entire nation mourns him 30 days.

MAZAL TOV!

A A very hearty Mazal Tov to Rebecca Levin and Joseph Cox (Portland, USA) on the occasion of their engagement this week.

A Katanga would like to wish the happy couple, their parents and extended families much naches and simchas in the future.



of years Jews have preserved their identity in lands not their own. Eretz Yisrael without Torah, on the other hand, can degenerate into the empty nationalism of other peoples.

Once we have the Torah, however, Eretz Yisrael becomes the ideal setting for the development of our spiritual potential, and the Beis Habechira - the house in Jerusalem chosen by Hashem as the dwelling place for His presence - the sacred shrine for facilitating total development of our human potential to connect with our Creator.

Today, when all Jews have the Torah and the opportunity to come to Eretz Yisrael - even if we have not yet merited having the Beis Habechira in our midst - we can joyously sing:

Dayenu!

- Minyanim times for this coming week are: Mornings: 6:40am and 7am. Mincha at 4:45pm followed by a shiur and Ma'ariv.

- Want to join the roster for presenting shiurim in the Youth Minyan? Speak to Ezra May, or email us.

Suggestions or comments regarding our website or newsletter? Email us – we would love to hear from you.

See us on the web at; <http://come.to/katanga>

Shabbat Shalom & Gut Shabbos to all! "The Editors"