

Community Shabbat Dinner at the Rabbi's home
Friday, July 8th
Following Services

Sponsored by Paula Dubrow in memory of her beloved mother
RSVP by Tuesday, July 5th

Friday, July 1, 2011 Candle Lighting 8:08 pm (Sag Harbor)

Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30 pm
27 North Harbor Drive, North Haven

Shabbat Morning, July 2 Old Whalers 9:30am
Rosh Chodesh Taamuz | Hallel
Kiddush sponsored by Madeline Noveck

This week's Torah reading: Chukkat
Annual: Numbers: 19:1 – 22:1 (Etz Hayim, p. 880)
Triennial: Numbers: 19:1 – 20:21 (Etz Hayim, p. 880)
Haftarah: Isaiah 66:1 – 24 (Etz Hayim, p. 1220)

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**Musings on Chukkat:** *Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as He had commanded him. 10 Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock; and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels, shall we get water for you out of this rock?" And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod. Out came copious water, and the community and their beasts drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them." Those are the Waters of Meribah—meaning that the Israelites quarrelled with the Lord—through which He affirmed His sanctity.*

When God first gets Moses to hit a rock and get the water, it is in front of the generation who left Egypt. Slaves, people who were used to miracles and magic. This time we have a generation who were born free, we are nearly at the fortieth year of the wandering, and something else is required for them as their thirst for water is addressed.

"God said to Moses and Aaron," "Because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them." Those are the Waters of Merivah - that the Israelites quarreled with God—" and then we have this strange phrase "**va'y'kadesh bam**" translated usually as some variation of "through which God affirmed God's sanctity."

It is this notion of the sanctification of God in this passage that I find deeply troubling. From the moment when God blessed and sanctified the Shabbat day (Genesis 2:3), the verb **va'y'kadesh** has an infrequent but powerful presence in bible.

It is used at the foot of Mt Sinai when Moses tells the people to prepare for the giving of the commandments in three days time, he tells them to wash themselves, to stay away from women, and he performs this verb upon them.

It is used when Aaron and his sons are taken through the rituals of becoming priests and particularly high priest. It is used again at the ritual opening of the Tabernacle readying it for sacrifices. All of these uses are not so much about making something holy, but about separation and dividing, making something ready for particular usage. The only time we hear about the sanctification of God is in the verse before ours,

*Vayomer Adonai el Moshe v'el Aharon, ya'an lo he'emantem bi, l'hakdisheini l'einei bnei Yisrael, lachen lo tavee'u et hakahal hazeh el ha'aretz asher natati lahem.* *And God said unto Moses and Aaron: 'Because you believed not in Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'*

But our verse continues as if an editorial interjection rather than continuing the words of God, not in the first person as the verse before, and not adding to the conversation so much as explaining a context: *These are the waters of merivah, where the children of Israel quarreled with God, va'y'kadesh bam .*

I would like to suggest that we are no longer in the realm of the punishment of Moses or even of the people with this verse, and we are also not in the realm of the sanctification (or not) of God. Instead, we should look at this verb **vay'kadesh** and recognize that it is reflecting the geography of the surroundings of the people of Israel; they are in the wilderness of Zin, in the area of Kadesh. In other words they are in an isolated and separated place, not yet part of a community, not connected to anywhere else.

The root **k.d.sh** comes to mean 'holy' by virtue of its more fundamental meaning – that of being separate, distinct and different. It makes sense in all the other usages of this word as a verb **va'y'kadesh**, as God separates the Sabbath day and makes it distinct, Moses separates out the people and warns them to be different from usual, the High Priest (and the priesthood generally) are separated from the rest of the populace. The tabernacle is also made a distinct and special place when it is given the status of Kedoshah by Moses once it is completely built. So why would we not translate our verse as “These are the waters of Merivah, where the children of Israel strove against God, and were separated/ isolated/ made different because of it.”

This is the generation that didn't have to leave Egypt. This is not the generation who were at Sinai. This is the generation who were born into the wilderness, born after the spies had led the people into a spiral of anxiety and depression by reporting that the promised land, while wonderful and fertile, was filled with giants who made themselves look pathetic in their own eyes. This is the generation who as yet know neither themselves nor God.

So maybe what is happening is that after punishing Moses and Aaron for their not teaching about belief and faith to the children of Israel and so being told that they will not be the ones who lead them into the promised land, the attention turns to the relationship between God and the children of Israel – **this generation** who were not yet taught to sanctify God and to have faith – and because of their striving against God, something different has happened to them.

There are times when we look for purpose in our lives and times when we simply jog along with them. Times when we need to believe and times when it doesn't seem so important. Times when we can believe and times when it seems impossible.

This is the very first time the new generation, the ones for whom miracles were the everyday occurrences of manna and water, of needs being met without much effort and battles being won without much loss, had to face something different. Miriam has already died, there is a shortage of water, Aaron and Moses were both getting older and there must have been a general understanding of the mortality of the leadership who had been there from the beginning, who spoke to God, who knew (or appeared to know) the purpose of the wandering.

This generation had to see something special; they had to see words bring about change. It was time for them to take on some of the intimations of obligation to God that up till now had been taken on for them. Moses and Aaron may or may not have failed in the way they carried out God's instructions, in many ways it doesn't matter; What matters is that an awareness was brought about that this new generation were not yet ready to take on the task of their elders. It was time for something to hasten their readiness. And so I read these verses not as sanctifying God so much as preparing and altering the people in readiness to take over the work. That by their striving against God they were creating a relationship that would change them. **Va'y'kadesh bam** is not God being sanctified by the waters of Merivah, a concept which eludes me to be honest, but the people being made ready to be holy by their actions at that time.

All of us need to grow and to alter, to take on the burden of the work that others have done before us, be it for the community or within the family; promotion at work or a change of career – we grow up and we grow. It is not something we have a choice about, and that too is made clear in this sidra. But what is also made clear is that however much we don't want to take on the work, however much we strive against it, we cannot escape it – the very act of striving against it changes us.... So we might as well take it on with good grace. For that too will sanctify us and support us in the work we do.

<http://www.wimshul.org/node/700>

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-- And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. (Numbers 20:11) A story is told of Rabbi Yisrael of Rozjen that he saw one of his children get angry at a disciple. When the son saw that Rabbi Yisrael heard the incident and yet remained silent the son became even angrier. The Rozjener rebbe silenced the son and said to him: When Moshe Rabbeinu struck the rock twice it was considered a transgression for it is possible and permitted for a person to lose his temper one time; however, if the person gets angry a second time it is a sign that he is hot-tempered and anger is a despicable trait. The gemora teaches that Gd gets angry every day, but the anger lasts one fleeting moment as we read in Psalms (30:6) *For Gd's anger is momentary.* From this teaching we learn that a person is not permitted to have anger for any longer than Gd's own anger, and since Moshe struck the rock twice, he was revealed to maintain his anger too long and for this fault he was punished.

http://adamfrank.typepad.com/adam_frank/2010/06/chukkat-5770.html

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A *midrash* notes that Moses had doubted and challenged God prior to this episode, but until now had done so only in private and therefore without censure. The confrontation at the rock, however, is impossible for God to overlook. Moses is punished not for lacking personal faith, but for not inspiring faith in the Israelites. Here, Moses allows the Israelites to see the cracks and fissures in his own faith in God. This weakness is reflected in the Israelites' future poor behavior and outbursts against God. Indeed, later in the *parshah*, the people complain again about the difficulty of life in the desert. They have not learned to trust in God.

This passage suggests that our public actions, ones in which we commit our names and our reputations, can have significant impact, and that they need to be constructive in order to be effective. As social justice activists we need the courage to declare the importance of bringing

justice to the world. Learning from Moses, we should make sure that our declarations are positive, have substance and invite participation. We must project and inspire confidence. We must speak to the rock....

To truly make a difference, we have to be willing to engage our values in public in a way that has meaning. We can call or write to our elected officials. We can attend a rally or a speech, and text our friends to join us there. We can write a letter to the editor or an op-ed. When we make donations to causes we believe in, we can allow those organizations to use our names in their lists of supporters. Or we can take a real risk with our Facebook friends and online followers, and actively engage them in an in-person conversation about the causes we believe in. Real engagement requires more than a mouse click.

We need to take up the challenge given to Moses by God to sanctify God's name publicly and in a substantive way. There is real risk involved in taking a confident stand in the sight of others, but there are also real rewards.

<http://www.on1foot.com/dvar-torah/ajws-dvar-tzedek-parshat-chukat>



## Happy Independence Day!

Barbecue and fireworks? Not for the Jews of 1776. That's because in 1776 the fast day of the 17th of Tammuz fell out on the 4th of July.

### Yom Huledet Sameach

Frances Stein

### End Quote

#### **America the Beautiful**

Words by Katharine Lee Bates, Melody by Samuel Ward

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet  
Whose stern impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare of freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife.

Who more than self their country loved  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness  
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the enameled plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till souls wax fair as earth and air  
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,  
Whose stem impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till paths be wrought through  
wilds of thought  
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale  
Of liberating strife  
When once and twice,  
for man's avail  
Men lavished precious life!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till selfish gain no longer stain  
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till nobler men keep once again  
Thy whiter jubilee!

**Shabbat Shalom.**

Stacy

## **DIRECTIONS TO RABBI UHRBACH'S HOME 27 North Harbor Drive, North Haven**

*From East Hampton and points east (via Route 114)*

Take Route 114 north to Sag Harbor. Continue on 114, turning left at the water, past the marina (windmill), which will be on your right. Cross the bridge and follow Ferry Road (Rte 114) for approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. At the first major intersection, Fresh Pond Road (Peerless Marine Supplies) turn right. Follow directions below.

*From Sagaponack, Wainscott, or Bridgehampton (via Sagg-Main or Bridge-Sagg Pike)*

Take either Sagg-Main Street or the Sag Harbor Tpke north into Sag Harbor. Go through the village of Sag Harbor to the end of Main Street. At the marina (windmill) turn left onto the bridge (Rte 114 North). Cross the bridge and follow Ferry Road for approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. At the first major intersection, Fresh Pond Road (Peerless Marine Supplies) turn right. Follow directions below.

*From Watermill (via Scuttle Hole Road)*

From 27, turn left onto Scuttle Hole Road. From Scuttle Hole Road turn left on Brick Kiln Road. At the first major intersection (approx. 1.3 miles), Brick Kiln Road will turn off to the right; continue straight instead, on Stony Hill Road. Continue straight on Stony Hill Road until it becomes Noyac Road (approx. .7 miles. Noyac Road will join Stony Hill from the right. Do not turn right at the sign for Noyac Road, but continue going straight). Turn right on Long Beach Hwy (approx. .4 miles). At the traffic circle, turn right onto South Ferry Road (sign will say Route 114 South). Turn left onto Fresh Pond Road (approx. .4 miles, at Peerless Marine Supplies). Follow directions below.

*From Southampton, West Hampton, and points west (via Noyac Road)*

Take 27 (Montauk Hwy) east. Turn left at the large green sign pointing toward Sag Harbor (just past East End Clambakes). This will be Sandy Hollow Road. Left at the first light onto North Sea Road. Take North Sea Road to Noyac Road –right onto Noyac Road, following signs to Sag Harbor. Turn left onto Long Beach Hwy. At the traffic circle, turn right onto South Ferry Road (sign will say Route 114 South). Turn left onto Fresh Pond Road (approx. .4 miles, at Peerless Marine Supplies). Follow directions below.

*All directions continue here:*

From Fresh Pond Road, take the first right turn (about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile) onto Harbor Drive (there will be a sign for Bay Haven). Follow Harbor Drive (a one-way street) approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way around (it will begin as W Harbor Drive, then S Harbor Drive, E Harbor Drive, and finally N Harbor Drive). Number 27 will be on your right.

### **PARKING**

If possible, please try to park in the driveway, leaving as much room as possible for other cars. You may park on the street, but please be particularly careful of the neighbors' lawns and driveways.