

1) Why Red, Red compare to $\frac{1}{N} \frac{1}{3} \frac{1}{0}$ $\frac{1}{0}$ $\frac{1}{3} \frac{1}{0}$ $\frac{1}{0}$

2) ~~to go from Red to Blue~~

3) ~~stands at~~

4) ~~to prevent us from showing~~

- a) ~~Depression from lack~~
- b) ~~Depression because won't do anything unless can do it perfect~~

5) Red Super done from ~~fund from bank~~
Red Super must be perfect

6) Red Super killed ~~outback camp~~ made
everyone who came into contact with it useless

On account that ~~really~~ ~~we~~ must be perfect. We don't ~~look~~ if you look at our ~~children~~ to grandchildren the ~~institutions~~ we help create

A wedding show ~~combustion~~

Stay most ~~negotiate~~ by ~~perfect~~
don't worry ~~the~~ ~~game~~ will show up

You Can't Do the Same Thing Twice
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

Life is very strange. Many times we can do something in one situation and it will be perfect, while if we try to do the same thing in another situation it will lead to disaster. We cannot just pull out pre-set responses and plug them into every situation. Every situation has to be dealt with individually. Generals know this very well. Usually a nation loses a war because it learned the lessons of the past war so well that it is now prepared to fight it over again. The only problem is that now new conditions have arisen and the current war is nothing like the past war.

In life many of us are all prepared to solve the problems of the past. The only rub is that now we have new problems and solving the problems of the past will not allow us to solve our current problems. There is no substitute for thinking. We cannot just pull out manuals and past cases and different law books and say, "See, this is what solved our problems before, therefore, we are now going to use the same solution to solve our problems now." It just will not work. In life there is no such thing as a risk free situation. We cannot just pick up a book and get the right answer. We have to evaluate every situation on its merits. True, we can use the experience of the past but only after we have noted where our current situation differs from the past. Two situations are never the same. Every problem must be looked at afresh and anew when it crops up.

This idea is emphasized in the Torah portion Chukas. In this Torah portion we learn about Moshe Rabbeinu's great sin, a sin which cost him the opportunity to lead the Jewish people into the Promised Land. The people were thirsting for water. G-d told Moshe to take his staff, to assemble the people and to speak to the rock so that it would give water. Moshe Rabbeinu did take the staff, he did assemble the people, but then he shouted at them, "Here now, you rebels, are we to bring forth water out of this rock?" and he lifted up his hand and hit the rock with his staff twice. Water did come gushing out, but Moshe had sinned terribly.

This is a very difficult passage. Why was Moshe's sin so great, and why, if he did

sin, did water come forth? What's more, what was so bad about hitting the rock?

Moshe many years earlier was faced with a similar situation. In the Book of Exodus in the Torah portion Beshalach, we learn how the people there were thirsting for water. Moshe there, too, was told to take his staff, to stand before the people, but then G-d specifically told him to hit the rock and water would come forth. Moshe did what he was told. He hit the rock and water did come forth. Why was it all right over there for him to hit the rock and bad for him to do it here? Moshe did nothing here different than he had done over there, but over there he did a Mitzvah while over here he did a sin. What were the differences between the two situations that Moshe should have noticed?

In life we are beset by different kinds of problems. Some problems we can solve by hard effort, by applying great amounts of energy, by being goaded into applying imagination, inventiveness, and stick-to-it-iveness. Moshe was told to take his staff, or Mateh, in Hebrew. The word "Mateh" also can mean all our good qualities, "Midos Tovos Hein", and to teach the people how to beat their problems with them until they were solved. In the Torah portion Beshalach the word for "problems" is "Tzur." Tzur is the same word as "Tzores", or "troubles." There are certain types of troubles which stem from Tzur, from being narrow, from not trying. The Jewish people had just come out of Egypt. They still had a slave mentality. They did not want to try to solve their problems. They would rather give up and go back to Egypt. Moshe had to take them and literally teach them how to beat their troubles with their own good qualities. He had to teach them that their effort made the difference. You can solve your problems, he urged them. You can bring out water, good things, from all your Tzores. You can "Maleh Yodeinu Meberchoseho." You can fill our hands with your blessings, which are what the letters in the word "Mayim", or water, stand for in Hebrew.

Many times problems are not being solved because the people are not trying. We all know that one of the biggest obstacles the Peace Corps faced when it went to foreign

lands was the unwillingness of the people there to even try to change their lot. They said, "It has always been this way and it will always be this way, and it does not matter what we do. It does not make any difference whether we have a water pump or not or whether we introduce sanitation or not. Children are still going to get sick and die." They could not conceive that conditions could improve. Sometimes leaders must teach the people how to forcibly attack their problems. This Moshe was very adept at doing and this he continued to do for almost 40 years in the desert. He had to convince a slave people that they could take their destiny in their hands and do great things. Now, though, the situation was different. The people were once again thirsting for water, but it was for a different reason. Miriam had just died and the well of water which had accompanied the Jewish people through the desert had ceased to be.

Miriam was one of the three "Parnoseem", or spiritual leaders, of the Jewish people. Moshe supplied the ideology, the goals, the intellectual content of the religion. He explained to the people why they were here and what G-d expected of them, etc. He gave them structure and meaning in life, but this is only one of the pillars of religion. Aaron taught the second pillar of religion, "Gemillas Chasodim", doing deeds of kindness. He showed them how religion must be based on ethical conduct, how peace and harmony and brotherhood must always be practiced in religion. Miriam stood for the third pillar of religion, hope. She stood for understanding, for giving the people the strength to live. She showed them how religion would give them the power to overcome. Intellectualism was fine and doing deeds of kindness was important, but religion also had to give the people the strength, courage, and hope to overcome their problems.

The people here were clamoring for water. They were clamoring for this aspect of religion. Moshe is associated with the manna that fell. Manna in Hebrew means "what is it?". Moshe was concerned with ideas and direction. Aaron was associated with the "Ananay Hakovod", the clouds of glory which protected the people. Ethical behavior

protects society and saves it from rancor, hatred, bitterness, greed, and selfishness. Miriam was associated with water, with the gift of hope, with the gift of renewal. Moshe could not understand what the people were clamoring for. He had given them all the right reasons for our religion. Aaron had given them ethical conduct. He did not know what they were asking for.

G-d told Moshe to take the "Mateh", or the staff. This time he was not to hit the rock. He was to talk to it. Mateh in Hebrew can also mean "tribe", and the word for "rock" here is not "Tzur" but "Selah." Selah in Hebrew can mean "a pause, an interlude, an elevation of the voice." It also can mean "to weigh, to value." The people were upset. How were they now going to handle the intractable problems of life, the problems of life we cannot solve by effort, the problems of death, of suffering, of frustration, of conflicting goals, and of our own imagination running wild? Where were they going to get the strength to deal with these problems? Miriam had given them this strength before. G-d told Moshe to bring the Mateh, the tribe. These problems can be overcome by being attached to a family, a group, a tribe. They can be overcome sometimes by silence, but mainly by speaking, by speaking among each other to get the strength to continue.

Moshe did not understand this. He thought G-d had told him to take the Mateh to hit the rock. He was angry at the people and he called them rebels because he thought they were doing the same thing that they had done before. They were trying to shirk their responsibilities, they were not trying to solve their problems. Moshe could make water flow but not the water they needed. They needed the water that could only come from a kind word, from feeling the warmth and presence of other people. Moshe sinned at this time because he did not realize the changed situation. He could not lead the people into the Land of Israel. He was stuck trying to solve the problems of the present with the solutions of the past. He was still fighting the last war. The new generation had new problems. He did not realize it. He could no longer be their leader.

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In life many times we find this is true. People try to solve the problems of today by defining today's problems as yesterday's problems. This will not help and this will not work. We must always realize that we face different problems, different conditions, and we must therefore come up with different solutions. We cannot solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions. We must look at every problem as it arises individually.

39.
CHUKAS 1981
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

In this Torah portion we learn about what religion must do in the world. It does not seem at first glance that this is what this Torah portion is talking about, but if we analyze it carefully we will see that it is. This Torah portion is talking about the three Parnaseem, the three leaders of the Jewish people, Moshe, Aron and Miriam. Each of these three leaders exemplified the three qualities which religion must bring to bear on life. The Rabbis teach us that because of the merit of Moshe the Jewish people were given the manna and because of the merit of Aron they were given the Ananay Ha Kovod, the clouds of glory or protection and because of the merit of Miriam they were given the well of water. Religion has three functions. Moshe was concerned about the "man", the what, the where of life. He wanted to give the people goals, meaning. When the people first saw the manna they did not know what it was so they said, "Man hu", what it is? Moshe was concerned with the what of life. This is important to have a structure, a meaning, a goal, a purpose, but this is not all of religion. Aron was concerned with Gemillus Chasodeem, with deeds of kindness. A religion which is divorced from deeds of kindness is no religion. We learn in the Gemorah Avoda Zora about Rabbi Hanina and Rabbi Elazer. Rabbi Hanina was arrested and not saved while Rabbi Elazer was arrested but saved. Rabbi Hanina explained that the reason for this was that he only occupied himself with Torah while Rabbi Elazer occupied himself with Torah and with deeds of kindness. Torah alone is worthless. Without deeds of kindness society collapses. The protection of the society disappears. When Aron died snakes appeared, the snakes of rancor, hatred, bitterness, greed, and selfishness. Deeds of kindness are essential for a religious vision. The third aspect of religion was symbolized by Miriam. Because of her the gift of life, giving refreshing water, was given to the Jewish people. Religion must give hope. It must give understanding. It must allow reassurance. People must get strength

and courage from religion. People can go a long time without the manna of religion but not the water of religion. People can live 50, 60 days without food but only a few days without water. Miriam was able to empathize with the people, to understand them, not to judge them harshly. Moshe did not understand all this. Right after Miriam died and the well of water was removed Moshe sinned. He was told to speak to the rock. Instead he hit it. He, Moshe, was more interested in goals and standards. He did not understand the people. The Rabbis say that when the people are suffering you have to understand them, not punish them. The people were without water but Moshe could only yell at them, "hear now, rebels" and beat their problems with a stick. It is true that certain problems can be overcome by urging and shouting. At an earlier time Moshe was told to hit the rock but most problems are not solveable, death, pain, sickness. They must be treated with sympathy. It is hard to understand people and their problems. We are taught not to judge them until we are in their place. In Israel there have been two types of Rabbis, one who had been open and tolerant like Rav Cook who accomplished a great deal, and others who accomplished very, very little. In order for religion to be effective you have to have all three elements, Torah, deeds of kindness, and understanding, tolerance. This is the only way people will get close to their religion. The story is told about the Pope who came to see Reagan. He noticed that on Reagan's desk were three phones, one was red, one was blue and one was white. The Pope asked Reagan what is the red phone for and Reagan said, "I call Breznev on that. The Pope said, "What is the blue phone for?" "I call Begin on that". Pope asked, "What is white phone?" "I call G-d". The Pope said, "Can I use it?" Reagan said, "Yes, but it's long distance. It will cost you \$15". Pope goes to Israel. Begin has three phones on his desk. One is red, one is blue, and one is white. Pope asked, "What

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is red phone for?" "I talk to Breznev on that". Pope asked, "What is blue phone for?" "I talk to Reagan on that". Pope asked, "What is white phone for?" "I talk to G-d on that." Pope takes out \$15 and says, "Can I call G-d?" Begin says, "Put your money away. From here it's a local call".

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK contd.

take his staff, to assemble the people and to speak to the rock so that it would give water. Moshe Rabbeinu did take the staff, he did assemble the people, but then he shouted at them "Here now, you rebels, are we to bring forth water out of this rock?" and he lifted up his hand and hit the rock with his staff twice. Water did come gushing out, but Moshe had sinned terribly.

This is a very difficult passage. Why was Moshe's sin so great, and why if he did sin did water come forth? What's more, what was so bad about hitting the rock? Moshe many years earlier was faced with a similar situation. In the Book of Exodus in the Torah portion Beshalach we learn how the people there were thirsting for water. Moshe there, too, was told to take his staff, to stand before the people, but then G-d specifically told him to hit the rock and water would come forth. Moshe did what he was told. He hit the rock and water did come forth. Why was it all right over there for him to hit the rock and bad for him to do it here? Moshe did nothing here different than he had done over there, but over there he did a Mitzvah while over here he did a sin. What were the differences between the two situations that Moshe should have noticed?

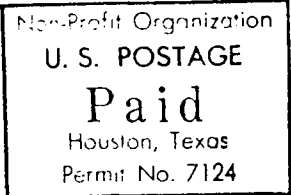
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United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

9001 Greenwillow
Houston, Texas 77096



were they going to get the strength to deal with these problems? Miriam had given them this strength before. G-d told Moshe to bring the Match, the tribe. These problems can be overcome by being attached to a family, a group, a tribe. They can be overcome sometimes by silence, but mainly by speaking, by speaking among each other to get the strength to continue.

Moshe did not understand this. He thought G-d had told him to take the Match to hit the rock. He was angry at the people and he called them rebels because he thought they were doing the same thing that they had done before. They were trying to shirk their responsibilities, they were not trying to solve their problems. Moshe could make water flow but not the water they needed. They needed the water that could only come from a kind word, from feeling the warmth and presence of other people. Moshe sinned at this time because he did not realize the changed situation. He could not lead the people into the Land of Israel. He was stuck trying to solve the problems of the present with the solutions of the past. He was still fighting the last war. The new generation had new problems. He did not realize it. He could no longer be their leader.

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In the Torah portion, Chukas, we learn about Moshe's sin. The Rabbis are very much puzzled by what exactly Moshe's sin was. In fact, some say that the Torah purposely does not tell us what Moshe's sin was. Some Rabbis say that his sin was that he lost his temper in public. Others say that his sin was that he called the people rebels when they were suffering. Others say that he was told to speak to the rock and instead he hit it. His sin is especially strange since earlier in the Torah portion, Beshalach, we learn how when the Jewish people came out of Egypt they had thirsted for water and G-d had told Moshe to take his staff and to hit the rock and water would come forth. Why was it alright for him over there to hit the rock, but not alright for him to hit the rock here? What's more, if G-d did not want him to hit the rock, why did He tell him here to take his staff? Also, it is very hard to understand why Aaron was punished for this. He did not do anything. Also, why is this sin of Moshe's placed where it is right after learning about the death of Miriam and right before the Jewish people were to enter the Land of Israel? In the Torah portion, Beshalack, we have used a different word for rock. The word in the Torah portion, Beshalach, is Tsur. The word for rock in Chukas is Sela. The word Tsur in Hebrew comes from the word Tsuras. It means to be narrow. There are certain problems in life that come to us because we are too narrow, because we are depressed, because we do not take advantage of opportunities that are presented to us. We are too narrow. We do not develop ourselves spiritually. We do not learn. We do not do Mitzvahs. Life becomes boring and we become depressed. You can always tell when a person is depressed because he stops taking care of himself. He does not want to get out of bed or get out of the house. A person is overcome by the simplest of problems. He has to be goaded into doing anything. The Jewish people when they left Egypt did not have any confidence. They had just been slaves. They did not know that they could solve a lot of the problems that they had. Moshe was told by G-d to take his Mateh, which stands for Maseem Toveem Haim. It stands for good deeds. He was to goad the people, to get them to get out of their Tsur, their narrowness. He was to allow them to see that they could accomplish things, that they could make their lives better. In our Torah portion the

word for rock is Sela which means a pause or an interlude or to speak or weigh or value. Miriam had just died. Miriam was the symbol of the comfort and balm that religion brings. Not all problems in life are solved, the problems of death, of sickness, of war, of total business collapse. There are certain things that are beyond the range of the individual. These problems Miriam used to deal with. Miriam would give the people hope and comfort. The people now had no one to comfort them, to give them strength to overcome their problems, their intractable problems. They were no longer slaves or had a slave mentality. They could attack the problems that were caused by their narrowness. Moshe had taught them well, but the intractable problems, the problems of death and suffering, these problems they had no one to comfort them now. G-d told Moshe to take his Mateh. Here Mateh means tribe. He was told to speak to the people, to comfort them, not to goad them and push them. Moshe did not understand. Aaron, too, was punished because he should have realized what the people needed also. He should have told his brother to stop goading them. Moshe hit the rock not once but twice and Aaron should have stopped him. In marriage, too, we have a relationship where the parties must both goad and comfort the other. They must know when to push their mate and goad them to accomplish what they could accomplish, to make sure they are never depressed. At the same time, they also must comfort them and not goad them when they should be offering them support and solace. Sometimes it is very difficult to tell what to do when, but this is the responsibility of every spouse. It is not always easy to tell when we should comfort and when we should goad, but in order to have a successful marriage we must learn. Goadng a person and chiding them over sickness or something that cannot be helped will only destroy the relationship. On the other hand, accepting a person being depressed and not challenging them will also destroy the relationship. It is very important to recognize the real problem and to respond to it. The story about a boy who came into a grocer and asked for some Duz to wash his dog. The grocer said, "Sure, I'll give it to you but it is very strong and might hurt your dog". The little boy said, "Don't worry, I'll not use too much of it". A few days later the little boy came back into the store and the grocer asked him, "How is your dog?" The little boy said, "He is dead". The grocer said, "I

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told you not to use a lot of Duz". The boy answered, "Oh, it wasn't the Duz. I think it was the rinse cycle." Sometimes in our concentration on one problem we forget the most important problem and we do not respond in the right way. This is what happened to Moshe.

39.
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The Torah portion Chukas deals with many topics. However, there is one underlying theme with which this Torah portion deals, and that is, how can a person deal with disappointment. In life we are all going to suffer many disappointments. It is inevitable. We are going to suffer the terrible disappointment of losing a loved one. Almost everyone loses parents and if the children die before the parents it is a greater tragedy. We all suffer the disappointment of not always reaching our goals. We cannot always win every vote. We do not always make the right decision and even if we do there are so many things beyond our control that can cause us to fail. A depression could hit, we have storms and hurricanes and wars and drought and famine. Each one of us fails whether because we are at fault or not, but whether we were at fault or not it is still a terrible disappointment not to reach your goal. There are inevitable setbacks in life. In this Torah portion we learn about the red heifer. We learn how when death strikes it is a terrible cruel blow. We cannot deal with it alone. We need the help of others. No matter how strong you are you cannot take the blow of the loss of a loved one by yourself. I know a family where the mother tried to pretend that the father's death meant nothing. Life would go on the same way. She made her children go to school the next day. They even went to Disneyland the next week because they planned it before the father died suddenly. She did not allow them to grieve. Grief, though, has to come out and be expressed. The boy ended up in an insane asylum because he could not handle it, and the woman did not act normal. We cannot deal with disappointment by pretending it does not exist. When we are disappointed and hurt we cannot say that it does not hurt and we are not disappointed. It will just come out in another way. Moshe Rabbeinu suffered a terrible disappointment in this Torah portion. He struck the rock instead of speaking to it, and he was told he could not go into Israel, his lifelong ambition. He could have faced this disappointment by saying, "I quit, I don't want to deal with it anymore, I have had it" and yet in the very next sentence it says, "Vayislach Moshe Mal Ocheem Mikodesh El Melech Edom" "and Moshe sent messengers from Kodesh to the king of Edom." Moshe did not quit.

He did not follow the philosophy of "rule or ruin." He persevered even though he was disappointed. He did not give up. He had the intestinal fortitude to continue. In this Torah portion we also learn how when the Jewish people went up Transjordan on their way to enter the Land of Israel, they fought against a king of Arad who took captives. They could have become discouraged and said, "Because we have this setback against a minor king we cannot go forward, we must stop," but here, too, the Torah teaches us that we should expect minor setbacks in achieving any goal. We should not give up. They did not give up and they eventually persevered. Today is Shabbos Rosh Chodesh. In the Haphtorah we read today we read how the new moon and the Shabbos are intertwined. We read "and it shall come to pass from one new moon to another and from one Shabbos to another shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord." The moon is the symbol of the Jewish people. It waxes and wanes. The wheel turns. Those who are on top end up on the bottom. The moon even disappears from sight for several days a month. Other nations may wax and wane and then disappear. The Jewish people come back like the moon comes back. Why is this? Because of the Sabbath. The moon is something in nature. Everybody can see the moon. Everybody can see when it grow large and small. Everybody can see the terrible disappointments in life, the loss of a loved one, the missed opportunities, the setbacks. I know a man came to see me a few years ago. He was very distressed because it looked like he was going bankrupt. He wanted to give me power of attorney and leave town. I convinced him to stay. He had to approach his creditors, but he is still in business. Where do people get the inner strength to overcome their problems? Shabbos is a symbol of the Jewish people's inner strength. You can always tell when the new moon comes. You can see it in the sky. Shabbos is invisible. It does not correspond to the laws of nature, but it will allow you to persevere. The values of family and realizing that you do not always have to work, the knowledge that your self-worth is not dependent on your income, the knowledge that spiritual values are important, the knowledge that effort counts, all these give a person the strength to face disappointments. We cannot

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Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

In the Torah portion Chukas we learn about Moshe's sin, how because he struck the rock and did not speak to it, he was not allowed to go into the Land of Israel. He forfeited his dream of leading the Jewish people into the land. It is interesting to note, though, that he was able to bring some water out of the rock. By hitting the rock, water did come forth. If his sin was so great, why was it that G-d allowed water to come out of the rock? What's more, why did G-d tell him to take his staff if He had no intention of allowing him to hit the rock? What's more, in the Torah portion Beshalach we learn how, when the Jewish people first came out of Egypt, they were thirsty for water, and G-d, at that time, told Moshe to take his rod in his hand and to smite the rock and water should come out. Why was it wrong for Moshe to hit the rock now, but it was right for him to hit the rock earlier?

In the Torah portion Beshalach when we learn how Moshe hit the rock, a different word is used for rock than the word we use in our Torah portion. The word in Beshalach is "Tzor". "Tzor" is the same word as "Tzores - troubles". It also means "to be narrow". Moshe brought out a slave people from Egypt. They did not have any confidence in themselves. When they would hit troubles, because they were narrow, they would give up. Moshe had to urge them and push them to develop themselves. He had to treat them as a father treats a young child.

In our Torah portion, though, Moshe was no longer dealing with the generation which left Egypt. He was dealing with the second generation, a generation who had been born free, who knew they could handle their problems. They, though, were suffering from another lack. Here the word for rock is "Selah", not "Tzor". The word "Selah" in Hebrew means "pause" or "interlude". Here the people were confronted by

problems not caused by being narros. They were confronted with the problems of life to which human warmth is needed, a good word is needed, not urging and pushing, the problems of pain, death, suffering. Moshe Rabbeinu was to take not the staff, the Mateh, made of wood, but the Mateh which in Hebrew means "tribe". He was to comfort and console people. He was to give them hope, a kind world.

That, of course, is what the Torah portion Balak is all about. Bilam tried to destroy the Jewish people through words. Words have a great power. They can either bring us up or cast us down. Words are what we need many times to help us get over the humps of life, not a goading stick. Recently a man came to me who used to earn \$65,000 a year working for a major oil company in town. He had just been get go. He came to me because he wanted some words of encouragement and hope. He did not need me to show him how to make a resume or apply for a job. He had already sent out 500 resumes. It is tough in Houston because even non-oil employers are afraid to hire ex-oil company employees because they say once oil rebounds, they will leave the lower paying job for a higher paying job in oil. All the man wanted was some encouragement, some hope, a shoulder to cry on. it was not my job to goad him.

Moshe could no longer be the leader of the Jewish people because he did not know how to handle this new generation. They were looking for words of hope and encouragement, and all he could give them was parenting type of goads. It is true these parenting type of goads will work for short periods of time, but they leave a bitter taste. Water did come out. The people needed new leadership. They needed Joshua. Joshua, though, could not have been the leader of the Jewish

when they left Egypt. He did not have the strength, and Moshe could not be the leader to lead them into Israel because he did not understand that what they needed now was encouragement and a good word.

Today on this Shabbos we are honoring the children who were born during the last few months. The youngsters who are being honored today need different types of care when they are 2 and 3 than when they are 15 years old. Many times parents make a mistake. They remember how they rebelled when they were 15 and 16 so they determine that they will not treat their children even at 3 and 4 like they were treated. Unfortunately, they fail to realize that they were very happy when they were treated in a childish fashion at 3 and 4 and even 7 and 8 because they were childish. Their parents just kept the same techniques too long. You cannot tell a one year old, "Go and be independent and make all your own decisions." Everyone knows that is ludicrous. On the other hand, you have to let a 15 or 16 year old make some decisions. When a child is already 20 or 21 you have to let them make all their decision. You cannot goad them. You can only give them a kind word and advice which they can or cannot take. No more can you use goads on them.

Children need not only words but a strong hand to guide them. It is true we learn things from children, like I remember once how a child rewrote the 23rd Psalm, and actually, in my opinion, made it better. "The Lord is my shepherd, and that is all I want," but basically children need to be directed. They want limits set. They are looking for examples and models. When children are grown they no longer need a limit setting parent. What they need is someone they can turn to for a kind word and understanding expression. They need

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a friend. You cannot treat a 4 year old like you would a 20 year old. Parents, when they raise children, should also make sure that they never confuse the child's sense of reality with the fantasies that abound around us. They also need to make sure that realistic expectations are made of children. We live in an age where fantasy and unreality are rife. Bilam tried to destroy the Jewish people by confusing reality with fantasy with unrealistic expectations. Sometimes we fill our children with many fantasies than when they grow up they cannot cope. We cannot tell them that if they brush their hair right and use the right toothpaste they will earn \$100,000. We have to prepare them adequately for the world.

I am reminded of the story of a mother who went to buy a toy for her child. She looked at the toy and said, "Isn't this very complicated?" The salesman replied, "Madam, this is an educational boy. It teaches a child how to cope with life. No matter how you put it together it is wrong." This, of course, is not what we believe, but if parents fill children's heads with fantasies about how easy things are and how you can always have everything you want when you want it, children will be very vulnerable and will turn to drugs. We also have to be very careful that we expect real goals from our children. To demand more than they can give, to demand superhuman goals would destroy a child. I remember how when Devora was younger we played a joke on her, but it hurt her very much. She brought home her report card with 2 A+'s and 3 A's. We said, "Why didn't you get 5 A+'s?" We should never demand unrealistic goals of our children.

The parents who are honoring their children this morning are good people. They are good parents and they love their children very

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much. It is our hope and prayer that they will raise their children so that their children will grow up to see their children's children and they will always be a source of naches and joy, and the parents will always realize you cannot treat a 4 year old like an 8 year old or an 8 year old like a 14 year old or a 14 year old like a 20 year old. Different ages demand different types of relationships. It is true there are problems in the world and life is hard.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a father whose son was bothering him with a lot of questions. The father gave him a puzzle and was sure it would take him at least an hour to finish it. Instead, the boy finished in ten minutes. The puzzle was a puzzle of the world. The father said, "How could you finish so fast?" The boy replied, "Well, I found on the back side of the puzzle there was a picture of a child, and when I made the child come out right, so did the world." We have a wonderful charge and a wonderful opportunity to help shape and mold beautiful children. If we succeed then the world, itself, will come out right.

CHUKAS

Why Are We Afraid of Religion?

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One of the comments I always hear as a rabbi is, "Rabbi, I want my children to be religious, but I don't want them to be fanatics."

People today genuinely want religion for their children, but they also fear it. Some fear that their children will look down on them if they become more religious than they. Others fear that their children will shut themselves off from life if they become too religious. They will ruin any opportunity they might have for self-development. Others fear that their children will turn into intolerant, self-righteous, smug, complacent individuals who will think that they have all the answers to all of life's problems if they become too religious.

These fears are not entirely groundless. Religion can be perverted and turned into a weapon to hit people over the head with. Religion, itself, can become a form of idolatry. Judaism does not believe that religion is just meant to get a person into harmony with the mystical being who created all, no matter what the cost. Other religions, especially ancient religions, did believe that in order to get into harmony with the gods you had to many times act immorally. Judaism was the first religion which stated that it was impossible to have any relationship with G-d unless you acted morally. We, in Judaism believe that there is a G-d Whose primary demand upon us is that we act ethically. We can have no relationship with G-d unless we act ethically. Of course, we have to do other things, too, in order to have a relationship with G-d besides act ethically. We have to study, develop good personal habits, develop our own abilities, be dedicated to truth and knowledge, pray, keep commandments such as kashruth, Shabbos, and the Holidays, but even if we do all these things we can never, in Judaism's, view, be considered religious

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if we act unethically. Those people who would lord it over others because they observe the commandments between ~~man~~ and G-d, prayer, kashruth, etc., but conveniently forget about the commandments between man and man, charity, morality, have turned Judaism into paganism. Paganism was not concerned at all about good or evil. It was only concerned about getting into harmony with the different gods, and the way to get into harmony with the pagan gods was to flatter and bribe them by doing prescribed ritual acts. The pagan gods were only interested in having their ego massaged, not in ethical behavior.

In the Talmud we learn G-d says, "I would rather have the people forget Me and treat each other well than remember Me and harm each other." Judaism is not magic. Magic means that you can force the gods to do what you want, that you can, through certain rituals, force the gods to do whatever you want them to do. Judaism rejects this belief completely. G-d does not have to listen to our prayers. It is good to pray to G-d, and He, of course, takes our prayers into account, but He does what He thinks is best. Religion scares people ~~also~~ because sometimes so-called religious people think that because they do certain acts they are immune from all of life's problems. This is false. You can live ethically, pray three times a day, keep Shabbos and still have problems. All G-d ever promised us is that if we will try to lead the good and caring life He will give us the strength to help us overcome our problems.

Religion also scares people because of what has been done in the name of religion. In the west, because of the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) when so many men were killed in Germany that the Catholic

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church had to wink at polygamy, the idea that religion could ensure peace and tranquility in the world become absurd. The Thirty Year War was a war between believing Catholics and believing Protestants. Since that time most thinkers in the west have sought to minimize the role of religion. Religion was thought to be too divisive a force to handle. The United States of America was ~~really~~ founded ~~based~~ on the idea that religion should never get control of government, otherwise we ~~will~~ ^{would} have endless religious wars. That's why the idea of separation of church and state is so strong here. The impact of what happened in Europe in the 1600's left an indelible mark on American thinking.

Since the 1600's the west's thinkers have propounded the idea that what could ensure peace and tranquility in the world was a belief in humanity. Let mankind be organized into nations with man being the highest value and soon world peace would be achieved. The energy which at one time was poured into religion by the intelligentsia of the west was now poured into humanistic causes. The Holocaust and the Communist excesses of this century have done for the idea of progress and the belief in man what the Thirty Year War did for the idea of religion. Now there is confusion. The people who believe in progress and mankind have difficulty lifting up their heads while, at the same time, those who believe in religion cannot shake off the excesses of the earlier religious persecutions. We are now in a period of now knowing what to believe. The belief in man turned into a belief in the state, Fascism, or into a belief in a super people, Naziism, or into a belief in the working class, Communism. All these beliefs ended in disaster, and we Jews suffered the most because

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of them because all those who espoused these beliefs knew that they had to eradicate Judaism if their beliefs were to be vindicated. Judaism stood 100% against all these beliefs.

In the Torah portion Chukas we have these problems discussed. This Torah portion starts out by telling us about the red heifer, by telling us about a ceremony which those people who had come into contact with the dead had to go through in order to become ritually clean before they could once again enter the Temple. They had to be sprinkled with a special liquid mixture which contained the ashes of the red heifer. The peculiar part about this ceremony was that all those who had a hand in preparing this mixture became unclean while those upon whom this mixture was sprinkled became clean. This was to teach us that these ashes of the red heifer were not magic. G-d ordained this ceremony in order to lift the psychological depression which comes upon people when they touch the dead, but it was not magic. It did not have special properties which always purified. The important element of this ceremony was that man, ~~himself~~, ^{can} ~~could~~ not purify himself. He needs ^S other people and G-d's presence. When a person comes into contact with death, with all the mysteries of life which death highlights, he cannot solve them himself. He needs the warmth and contact of other people and faith in G-d.

This same lesson is emphasized throughout this Torah portion. Moshe Rabbeinu is punished severely because he strikes the rock and does not speak to it as G-d told him to do. Moshe, here, again was using religion as a club to beat the people with. He was berating them for their lack of faith. He was setting himself up as a paragon

of virtue. In fact, the Rambam says that his great ~~sin~~^{sin} was not ~~in~~^{his} striking the rock but ~~in~~^{by} calling the people rebels. He had no right to judge the people so harshly. When people are thirsty, when people have problems, we should comfort them. We should not berate them and become pompous and smug.

The rabbis tell us that the Torah is compared to water. They tell us that Moshe struck the rock right after Miriam had died. They tell us that it was because of Miriam that the Jewish people had had water. A special well accompanied the Jewish people throughout the desert thanks to Miriam. Miriam had always been a source of hope. It was Miriam who urged her father to return to her mother after her father had decided, after ~~the~~ Pharaoh's decree about the killing of all the male children, that it would be better if the Jewish people had no more children. Miriam approached her father and said, "Father, how can you say this? Pharaoh had only decreed against the boys, but you have also decreed against the girls. Let's not let Pharaoh win this victory." Miriam was the hope that Judaism would be able to solve all ~~their~~ problems and bring world peace.

After Miriam died the people could not believe in this simple faith anymore. They were overcome with the immediate problems of life. They thought their faithfulness would shield them from all of life's problems. It will not. Moshe tried to supply them again with hope. He thought he could force them to believe it. That's why he struck the rock. He should not have done this. He should have talked to them and convinced them with words showing them that, true, they

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had problems, but G-d would give them the strength to overcome them. He meant to stike what the letters of the word "Sela" or "rock" in Hebrew can stand for. "Sof Ladoshem Achshof - the end of G-d now." All they could now believe in was what Aaron stood for, man, but they found that when Aaron died they were confronted with a plague of snakes. Believing in man was like believing only in snakes. Man is a very difficult creature to believe in. We have such capacity for violence and cruelty. They only way they could be cured from this plague of snakes was to look up to heaven. The^y once again had to reassert their faith in G-d, a faith which did not shield them from all problems but which said that if they acted ethically and righteously, G-d would give them the necessary strength to overcome their problems. Shortly afterwards the people discovered water and were given the necessary strength to overcome their problems.

Those people who are afraid of religion have no substitute for it. They cannot believe in man. Those people who prevent their children from becoming religious because they are afraid of being mocked end up forcing their children to rely on false gods, either false isms or alcohol and drugs. They shortchange Judaism. Judaism abhors looking down on people. It is true that in the west religion failed, but we have to remember that it was not Judaism that failed. We did not kill or massacre anyone. We have the Talmud and a vast store of Jewish learning which would have protected us from these excesses. Those who are truly religious in Judaism cannot become smug and complacent, and they could not ^{have} perpetrated ~~all~~ the excesses that were done in the ~~middle ages~~ ^{name of religion} and during the 1600's. Let's not be afraid of Judaism because of the sins of others.

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It is very interesting to note that most of those who survived the concentration camps have not lost their faith in G-d. They just lost their faith in man. Almost all the Chassidim are survivors. If people mean when they say, "I want my child to be religious but not a fanatic, I want my child to practice Judaism and not a perversion of Judaism," then I agree with them one hundred percent, but if they mean, "I don't want my child to be religious because it ^{will} make him smug and complacent or it will make it too hard for him to successful in the world," then I cannot ever agree with them. Without a firm basis in Judaism today our youngsters run the far greater risk of becoming dope addicts or alcoholics or followers of false isms which will ruin their lives than any danger they would face by becoming more religious. Let us not be so much afraid of religion. Let us instead be ^{much} more afraid of what could happen to our children if they do not have enough religion.

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In the Torah portion Chukas we learn about Moshe Rabbeinu's sin. We learn how, because Moshe struck the rock and did not speak to the rock, he was barred from entering the land of Israel. This seems very strange because, after all, striking the rock with the staff is almost as great a miracle as speaking to the rock. Besides which, we learn in the Torah that when Moshe did strike the rock, water came out. "VaTaishta Aida Uv Irun - And the congregation drank and their cattle." If Moshe had sinned and not followed G-d's will, why did G-d allow water to come out from the rock? Why didn't G-d just say, "Moshe, since you sinned and did not do what I said to do, therefore, water will not come out from the rock." This whole incident of Moshe striking the rock came after we learn about Miriam's death. Miriam, of course, was Moshe's older sister. She had watched over him when he was a little baby when his mother placed him in the Nile. She was his source of inspiration. The rabbis tell us there were three Parnosin, three leaders of Israel for the generation that came out of Egypt: Miriam, Moshe, and Aaron. Miriam was in many ways a more effective leader than Moshe because, under her leadership, the women of Israel did not worship the golden calf, they did not participate in the sin of the spies, and it was thanks to their moral courage, the rabbis tell us, that the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt because they did not allow the men to give up hope. When the men wanted to give up hope it was they who rallied the courage of the men and even encouraged them to have children when many men had decided they should not have children because they would be born as slaves. The rabbis tell us that it was thanks to Miriam that a well of water accompanied the Jewish people, and this well of water ceased after Miriam died, and it was because of this that the people came to Moshe thirsting for water. The rabbis explain

that manna came to the Jewish people because of Moshe Rabbeinu. Manna in Hebrew stood for the bread that they received from heaven, and when the Jewish people saw these coriander seedlike things that came every morning, they said, "Man Hu - What is it?" Moshe told them what it was. In effect, Moshe's leadership role in the Jewish people was to give the people direction, to tell them what life was about, how we are to lead it, and what we are to do in life. He was to answer the great philosophical questions of life just as his brother, Aaron's symbol was "Anone HaKovod - clouds of glory" which surrounded the Jewish people. Aaron was a Rodef Sholom and a Ohaiv Sholom. Aaron was one who pursued peace and who loved peace. It was thanks to him that there was peace among the Jewish people. After he died the Anone HaKovod left the Jewish people, and then the Torah tells us that a plague of snakes descended upon the Jewish people. The word that is used here for snakes is "Nachash" which can also mean in Hebrew "to guess", "to estimate". It was Aaron who inculcated ethical values in the Jewish people. He was the one who made sure every Jew treated every other Jew with respect and dignity. Human beings are very good at rationalizing. We can create all sorts of values for ourselves, which, unfortunately, we do in most instances only to better our own positions, not because we want to really be ethical. Aaron stood for the position that there are ethical values outside a man, objective values, and that we all had to adhere to these objective values, and that we all had to follow the moral law, not like people today who make up all sorts of theories and guesses and say, for example, adultery strengthens marriage, cheating helps business, man is supposed to live certain types of life styles which allow him the maximum freedom even though they hurt others. These types of philosophies can only lead to society breaking down, to society turning into, so to speak,

a nest of vipers. That, of course, we hear all over. We hear today how the poor should take care of themselves. The rich have no responsibility to them. Let just the poor pay taxes. If the rich pay taxes you are destroying the class that creates wealth, etc., and all this bunch of hooey. The only place in the world where the rich do not pay taxes are in Central and South America where you have the poorest economies in the world and the greatest social problems. We have to be careful because when we can make all sorts of conjectures and moral guesses based upon so-called higher morality, subjective morality, morality which does not come from the outside, we end up creating societies in which one human being is pitted against another. That Aaron tried to prevent.

That is why when this plague of snakes descended upon the Jewish people G-d told Moshe to take a snake and place it on a banner and all those who would look at that snake would live. The reason being that all the people could see that these were nothing more than conjectures, self-justifications, that these instances of subjective morality would not unify the people, would not create peace among the Jewish people but would only create disharmony and destroy, just as many times in institutions people will say, "Oh, let the poor pay all the taxes. Let the poor pay high dues. The rich we can just get what we can from them. Anyway they are paying more in absolute terms than the poor anyway." This, of course, is destructive because it shows there is no fairness, no sense of equity and justice in these institutions, and these institutions will crumble. It was Aaron who preserved the ethical impulse of Judaism and allowed peace and harmony to reign. Miriam was the one who gave hope to the Jewish people. There are so many problems in life that are intractable, that we cannot solve, that we need hope, the feeling and

assurance that our sacrifices and suffering are not in vain and that eventually things will be good. The main Jewish phrase you hear today in Israel which typifies the Jewish attitude toward life is "Yeeyeh Tov - It will be good." You know, in ancient pagan times the symbol of life was really the circle, the circle which said that man is born, becomes a child, a teenager, middle aged, old aged, and dies. You have spring, summer, fall, winter. Life is an endless cycle, an eternal circle in which you cannot break out of these chains of the circle, that you really cannot improve anything in life because we are all trapped in this circle.

Judaism disagrees with this view of life. Judaism says life is a spiral. It is true that after birth comes childhood and teenage and middle age and old age and death, but, yet, we are not in a circle. We are in a spiral. We can elevate life. We can make life better for future generations. Of course, being in a spiral we can also lower life. We can also make things worse. It is our job, though, to make things better, and we can. Future generations can learn from our mistakes and can also benefit from our discoveries, and even if we encounter problems and do not solve them correctly our example of trying will help them solve these problems correctly in the future. Miriam was to give the people hope, to lift depression from the people, to solve these intractable problems. When she died Moshe lost his touch with the people, and when the people suffered and came to Moshe and told him about these intractable problems, and, of course, that is what the word "Selah" means (hard place, rock, a silence, a pause), and they asked for Moshe's help, Moshe thought they were loafing, that they were malingering, and Moshe used a stick on them, in a sense. As he had for the slaves who

came out of Egypt, he told them they had to produce or else. He was not going to listen to any excuses. It is interesting to note that in the text when G-d tells Moshe to gather the Jewish people together "and you shall bring for them water from the rock", it says "and you shall water - Es Hoeda - the congregation - V'es Birom - and their cattle." Later when Moshe does produce water from the rock, it says, "Va Taishtoeda Uv Irom." These is no "s". "And the congregation drank and their cattle." In other words, in the statement that G-d gave to Moshe the congregation and their cattle are separate, but in the statement that is given after they drank it says they drank as if they were one. Moshe treated the Jewish people like they were cattle. It is true that when you are the boss and you have people working for you, you tell them to do this and this and this, and they should listen to you because, after all, you are the boss, but when you are dealing with mature human beings on an equal level you do not talk to them that way. People are not slaves. People are not children. You do have to talk to children that way. "Do what I say and later on you will understand." But when people came to Moshe with real problems, Moshe did not know how to handle them. He did not know the people were coming for hope. He did not understand that. He thought the people were just coming in order to get out of doing what they should be doing and he told them, "Do what I say," etc.

Many times people also use words against people the same way, and they try to force them to do all sorts of things people do not want to do through tricking them with words of their tongue. This, of course, is terrible because, although they may get the people to do what they want them to do (these people may not be smart enough to come back with a reply), they hate the person who forced them into this position because

they know they have been tricked. They know they have been fooled.

Although the person thinks he has gained a great victory, he has actually suffered a great loss, because he has lost all his friends and all his influence in the future. People will not respect him anymore because they know that they, in effect, beat them with words, into doing something they really did not want to do. People have dignity. They deserve respect. The second generation who had grown up in the desert were free men. They could not be treated like slaves or children. They had to be talked to in the proper way with dignity and respect. They had to have things explained to them. Moshe could not use his mouth. Moshe could not explain how to get hope out of hopeless situations, how to see the best in life, how to inspire them with a vision of the true and the good, how to motivate them by showing them a vision of the future.

Instead, he tried to force them to do what they should do through a rod, a stick. He, in effect, was destroying that aspect of humanity which G-d wants us to develop most, and that is our sense of responsibility to do the right because we understand it is the right because we see that this is the way we should achieve our goals. These people believed in Judaism and wanted to follow the ways of the Torah. Moshe should have explained to them how to do it, but he was not fit to lead the next generation. He was still treating them as if they had just come out of Egypt, as if they were slaves.

When we deal with all our problems, when we deal with problems in the family between spouses, between children who are grown, between institutions or within institutions, we must always treat each other with respect and dignity. We must explain things in an honest and sincere fashion. That is why in America today politicians are not respected

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because people always think they are using words to trick them in order to get their vote so that these politicians can be re-elected to office. These politicians seem to use words only to force us, so to speak, to give them our vote. They will never be respected because they are not considered honest and sincere. People do not trust what they say. We, if we are to build a just and a good society, if we are to have peace in our home, if we are to have peace in our institutions, we must always deal with each other in truth and honesty and sincerity, and we cannot whip people into doing things either with a club or with words, but we have to speak honestly and with sincerity. If we will do this we will succeed and the Mashiach will come.

I am reminded of the story they tell of a man who was giving a speech when all of a sudden the microphone started to hiss and spurt. They called the maintenance man, and he fiddled with it for a while. Finally the maintenance man turned to the audience and said, "I am afraid you will not understand the words that are spoken today. The speaker has a screw loose." Of course, he was referring to the microphone, but, unfortunately, there are many speakers who do not speak with honesty and integrity and try to whip the people into doing things. They are doomed to failure because they ultimately will not succeed even if they can get a group of people or individual to do something once. They will resent it and hate him, and society will not go forward and achieve the things that could be achieved if people would be talked to with integrity, sincerity, and respect.

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The Torah portion Chukas is composed of many disparate elements. There does not seem to be a unity in the Torah portion Chukas. In the beginning we learn about the laws of the red heifer, and then afterwards we learn how Miriam died, and then we learn how the people were thirsting for water and Moshe sinned by beating the rock. He hit the rock not once but twice when he was supposed to speak to the rock, and because Aaron did not protest Aaron was also implicated in this sin. Then we also learn about Aaron's death, and then we learn how a plague of snakes attacked the Jewish people and how they were saved by having a copper snake made and how when they looked at the copper snake they would live. Then we learn about the battles against Sichon Melech Hamori against Og Melech Haboshem in TransJordan, how Moshe Rabbeinu conquered these two kings and how the area of TransJordan then passed over to the Jewish people. When we learn about Sichon Melech Hamori we have a sentence there which does not seem to make sense. It says, "Cheshvon is the city of Sichon the king of Hamori." Then it continues by saying, "Therefore, they said those who made parables, 'Come to Cheshvon. It will be built and it will be established the city of Sichon.'" What is this talking about here? Why do we have to learn about the history of Sichon Melech Hamori here? The Torah does not teach us the history of other peoples. The Gemora in Bababasrus says that actually this sentence means something altogether different. This sentence means, "Therefore, they those who control themselves, come and make a reckoning, and the reckoning is, of course, the gain of a mitzvah against its loss and the loss of an Aveira, a sin, against its gain, and then you will be built up and you will be established. You will be built up in this world and you will be established in the next world." In other words, from this sentence we learn what the underlying message is of the Torah portion Chukas.

The underlying message of the Torah portion Chukas is that a person should not lose control of himself, that when a person loses control of himself a person, in effect, destroys himself. Also, as we learn in the Gemora, when a person loses

control of himself he also loosens all sorts of hellish forces upon himself, and we all know that to be true, that one of the tried and true political techniques in America and in American politics and in institutions that thrive in America is to try to destroy your opponent by having him destroy himself. Try to get him mad and when he gets mad many times he loses all restraints and he pours out his anger at everything around, and because his response is not measured and is not in accordance with the provocation he destroys himself. Many times what happens then is that person becomes ashamed and either withdraws from the race or does not want to pursue the race anymore, or what he does because he has lost control of himself is that he is forced to make all sorts of apologies and he damages his race, or if it happens to do with an institution, he just quits the institution and does not participate in it anymore. So we see that when a person loses control of himself he, in effect, destroys himself and that what we are supposed to do is make sure we control ourselves. This does not mean that we do not laugh and rejoice at happy occasion or dance and sing at weddings or cry at funerals. When our emotions are in response to a given situation then they are perfectly all right and they should actually be indulged in. We do not believe in stifling your emotions as, for example, the Prussians believed in. We also do not believe that a person should never lose his temper, but if you lose your temper you should lose your temper against something which is morally wrong.

For example, we learn it says that Moshe lost his temper when he saw that an Egyptian was beating up a Jew, and he slew the Egyptian. He hit the Egyptian. His response was commensurate with the occasion, and many times we know, too, when we see that the poor are suffering and children are hungry we should get angry and we should do something about it, so it depends upon what the provocation is. It depends whether the response is in proportion to the provocation. Righteous indignation, of course, is something that we all know is a favorable characteristic, but people who because their boss yells at him comes home and yells at their wife or their

children, that kind of a person is not in control of himself because the object of his anger is not his wife or his children, although that is eventually who his anger is directed at. The object of his anger is really his boss. He knows that he cannot vent his anger, though, at his boss or he may lose his job, so, therefore, he should dissipate his anger in other ways, but he should not take it out on his wife and children. That is not right or the thing to do. We all know people who always have to have the last word no matter what the situation. Why do they always have to have the last word when by having the last word many times they make a situation very bad and they lose control of themselves? That is entirely unnecessary. Nobody expects a person to always have the last word. Sometimes it is important that other people have the last word, especially that your spouse has the last word. A husband does not always have to have the last word. Sometimes a wife can have the last word.

This applies in many other areas of life as well. When a person loses control of himself then he is in great difficulty. It is true that according to Freud we have repressed memories many times, that many times children especially who they say had an incestual relationship when they were a child that they repress that memory. Therefore, it is important in psychoanalysis to uncover their memory so it can be dealt with, but, of course, this does not mean that a person then should do anything he wants to do or feel he can do anything he wants to do. It means that many times when the controls on the unconscious which are stifling this memory are losing their grip, that many people avoid this memory by engaging in all sorts of neurotic behaviour, but that does not mean that after this idea or event is revealed that a person then should lose all control and say and do anything he wants. I remember that I once was given the job by the ministerial association to visit all the juvenile delinquents in jail, not here but in Indiana. I took upon myself this job and I took it quite seriously. I visited a young man 17 years old who had just beat up an old lady and mugged her. I asked him why he did it.

He said because he felt like it. I asked him if he always did everything he felt like and he said, "Rabbi, you wouldn't want me to be neurotic, would you?" Of course, that is a complete misapplication of Freudian psychology. Even if you agree that Freudian psychology is correct, it does not mean that you are allowed to do anything that you want to do, and after this experience is revealed to you and you understand the memory you are repressing, then you have to learn how to control it, and if you cannot control it then, of course, you are in deep trouble. It is like an alcoholic. An alcoholic, first of all, has to recognize his problem, but after he recognizes his problem that is not the end of the story. Then he has to learn how to handle his problem. He cannot minimize it. It is going to take quite a bit of effort to control his problems. He is going to have to be able to discuss it with good friends. He is going to have to look up to a mentor or someone he can turn to in times of stress and wants to reach for the bottle again. He will also need G-d's help in order to control himself. It is not an easy job and people underestimate the strength they have to control themselves. This is something that the Torah life gives a person, the ability to do. You use your emotions at the correct times, that you never lose control. If you lose control you will end up by destroying yourselves.

That is what we learn about in the beginning of the Torah portion when we learn about the red heifer. According to the Sforno if you look at what makes up this type of sprinkling or objects which were sprinkled on a person who was ritually unclean you will see they are composed of opposites. This liquid sprinkle was composed of the ashes of the red heifer plus water. The ashes were made from fire. You are combining fire and water here, which are two opposites. You also have the hyssop and the moss, which stands for arrogance and humility. The person should learn that if he gets in contact with the dead many times he lets himself go. He cannot control himself because death is such a wrenching and terrible experience, but that person must choose the middle path. He cannot lose complete control of

himself and indulge himself in all sorts of antisocial behavior is what people used to do in the ancient days when they were confronted with death. That is the reason, according to the Sforno, for much of the ritual of the red heifer.

We know later on, too, that Moshe Rabbeinu was punished, not so much because, the rabbis say, he hit the rock because, after all, G-d had told him to take his staff and when the Jewish people had left Egypt he was told actually to hit the rock, but why was Moshe Rabbeinu punished at this time? Because he completely lost control. He did not understand the people. This was a new generation. He did not understand their problems. Miriam had just died and Miriam symbolized Mayim, the water of Torah, symbolized the hope of Torah and these people were looking for a good word from Moshe. They were not looking for him to goad them into solving their problems. It is true that when they left Egypt they were slaves and they did not feel they had the capacity to solve their problems, but now they knew they had the capacity to solve their problems and they were just looking for a good word for Moshe. Instead Moshe, metaphorically anyway, hit them with a staff twice. What did he yell at them? He yelled at them, "Listen, you rebels, from this rock will we bring forth to you water?" He had lost his cool completely. He felt the Jewish people were lacking faith because they were lacking water now, but the people were suffering and Moshe should have understood that and Moshe should not have lost his cool. Because he lost his cool, therefore, he lost the leadership of the Jewish people.

We learn later on after Aaron had died that a plague of snakes infested the camp. The rabbis say that Aaron stood for the ethics of our religion, just as Moshe Rabbeinu stood for the ideology, the philosophy of the religion. He stood for the manna. The manna means what is it? He was the what and the why of Judaism. Aaron stood for the ethics of Judaism. When Aaron died the people said, "Oh, the ethics were only from Aaron. They are not from G-d. I can do anything I want to do as long as it makes me feel good." They lost control of a feeling that ethics are objective.

Of course, what they then did is enshrine their own ideas. They became Sfracim. What does Sfracim mean? It means angels. We can set our own ethics. We do not need anybody to set our ethics. Of course, they were bitten by their own Sfracim, which also means a snake as well as an angel. They were bitten by their own feeling that they were angels. When they make ethics completely subjective, as many people are doing today, you will see the rise in crime and the lack of morality. The people had to put up a brass snake to see that this is what the Seraf means. It means a snake. It does not mean that you are an angel and you can set up yourself all types of morality. It does not mean you can let go and lose control of yourself and do things that normally you would not do just because you feel like it.

That, of course, is the underlying message of this Torah portion, and that is, of course, why we learn about Cheshvon there. Cheshvon is not the city of the king of Hamori. Yes, it was also his capitol, but Cheshvon in this context means that we have to reckon what is requires for us to lead a good life and a right life and that is not to lose control of ourselves but to maintain control of ourselves. That is what we must do if society is to function correctly and if we are to be able to bring the Mashiach quickly in our day.

I remember the story they tell about a woman who came to her husband and said, "You know, Honey, our carborator has water in it." Her husband looked very startled and asked how she knew. He said she did not know anything about an engine or mechanics. The wife said, "Listen, Honey, I am telling you there is water in the carborator." He said, "Okay, Sweetheart, if you say there is water in the carborator there is water in the carborator. Now tell me where the car is and I will go and look at it." The wife said, "It is in the swimming pool." Obviously, the wife was right but there was water in the carborator because obviously she lost control of the car and it went into the swimming pool. We have to be careful in life that we do not lose control because if we lose control inevitably disaster occurs. We

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say things that we should not say. We do things that we should not do, and we alienate people that we really love and that we do not want to alienate, so let us hope and pray that none of us will lose control so that our society will function correctly and the Mashiach will truly be able to come. Amen.

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In the Torah portion Chukas we learn about Moshe Rabbeinu's sin. We learn how after Miriam died the people no longer had water to drink, and, therefore, they complained against Moshe and they said, "Why did you bring this congregation of G-d to this desert to die there, we and our cattle? Why did you bring us out from Egypt to bring us to this bad place, a place not of seed or fig or vine or pomegranate and there is no water to drink?" Moshe's response to the people's complaint was very peculiar. Moshe did not try to remonstrate with them or argue with them. Instead it says that Moshe and Aaron came from before the congregation to the opening of the tent of meeting and they fell there on their faces and the glory of G-d appeared to them, and what did G-d tell Moshe? G-d told Moshe to take the staff and to assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and you should speak to the rock to their eyes and it will give its water, and you should bring out for them water from the selah, from this rock, and you should give to drink this congregation and their cattle, and Moshe took the staff from before G-d as He commanded, and Moshe and Aaron gathered together the congregation to the face of the rock and he said to them, "Listen, please, you rebels, from this rock will we bring forth for you water?" And Moshe lifted up his hand and he hit the rock with his staff twice and a great deal of water came out and the people of the congregation ate and their cattle. And G-d then said to Moshe and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore, you will not bring this congregation to the land which I give to them." This whole episode seems very strange. First of all, why did G-d tell Moshe to take the staff when Moshe was not to use the staff as he had earlier when the Jewish people first had left Egypt. Then when they first left Egypt he was told actually to strike the rock, and, here, he was told to speak to the rock. If he was only going to speak to the rock, why should he have taken out the staff? Also, here, too, we see that he was punished "because you did not sanctify Me in the eyes of Israel". What difference did it make whether he strikes the rock or speaks to the rock?

After all, they are both miraculous if water comes out. You can take all the staffs you like and strike rocks and no water is going to come out, so what does it mean "he did not sanctify Me in the eyes of the sons of Israel"? Also, what are the Jewish people saying, why did you bring us out from Egypt to bring us to this bad place? We can understand how the first generation of Jewish people when they left Egypt hankered back to Egypt because they were a slave people. They were not interested in making their own decisions. They were not trained to do that. They yearned to have somebody else tell them what to do. In fact, we know that children that are raised in orphanages have a very difficult time making decisions in their life and that they prefer institutional life because they have never learned how to make decisions for themselves. We know that that generation had to die out in the desert because that generation did not have the independence in order to conquer the land of Israel, but here we are dealing with the second generation, the generation which had been instructed by Moshe Rabbeinu for 40 years, and here they do not seem to have learned anything. I thought that they were independent people who wanted to take their destiny in their own hands, and here it says, why did you bring us out from Egypt to bring us to this evil place?

Perhaps if we look at the text carefully we can see that there is a difference between this generation and the first generation. This generation did not ask to go back to Egypt. This generation only asked, why did you bring us out from Egypt to bring us to this bad place, a place not of seed or fig or vine or pomegranate and there is not any water to drink? Their complaint was not that they now had to make independent decisions. Their complaint was that they could not make independent decisions. The other generation did not want to make any independent decision at all. They would rather be slaves in Egypt. Let somebody else tell them what to do. This generation had been taught how to be independent but here they were still dependent. They were not dependent upon Egyptian overseers or overlords,

but they were dependent solely upon the manna of G-d and upon His grace in the desert, and they wanted to strike out for themselves. They wanted to fulfill their talents that they had. They wanted to be somebody, and here they were stuck in the desert.

It is similar in a way to where we find that a father has a flourishing business and when a son gets out of school he does not want to go into the business because he wants to be independent. He wants to make it on his own. Of course, usually after he has a few children he is glad to go back into the business. He finds that it is very difficult to earn a living, but sometimes there is no more opportunities anymore. Once he turned down the offer, sometimes it no longer exists. We see that happen, unfortunately, many times where many flourishing Jewish businesses are just sold or closed because there is nobody to take them over, and here these young people are complaining, give me a chance. I want to make it on my own. This is not a place of seed or fig or vine or pomegranate to drink. Water in Hebrew also has the connotation of ideology. The Torah is called Mayim. In other words, they are tired of being spoonfed everything. They want to strike on their own, make their own decisions. They will not even be bound by what the Torah is telling them. They want to see if they can make it independent of everyone. That's why Moshe and Aaron are befuddled because they do not understand this. This is not the generation that came out of Egypt. This was not the generation that they had to prod and push, and, therefore, they fell on their faces and the glory of G-d appeared to them. And what did G-d say? He said to take the staff. Now this staff that they were to take was not the staff just any ordinary staff. The Rashbam says that this was the staff that Aaron had put along with the other staffs of the other tribes in the Holy of Holies after the Jewish people had revolted under the leadership of Korach against Moshe, and at that time even though Korach's rebellion had been put down the people were not satisfied that Aaron should be the true leader. They had said after Korach and his followers had been killed, are you going to

kill all the people? They were not convinced that Aaron should be the high priest. They were not convinced that they should submit to the laws of the Torah, so, therefore, when all these staffs were put inside the Holy of Holies the next day only Aaron's had bloomed. Moshe was to take that staff because the people's problems there were not that they were afraid of striking out on their own and making decisions. The problem now was that they thought that perhaps the Torah was going to hinder them in making these independent decisions. The problem with the first generation when they came out of Egypt was that they were too narrowly focused. They could not see the possibilities. That's why the word for rock in that particular instance is called tzur, which means narrow. These were people who could not stand tzores, who could not stand any type of problems, and Moshe had to prod them to build their self-confidence and self-esteem and to make sure that they would be fit to solve any situation that would come their way. This generation, on the other hand, had basically the opposite problem. They felt that they could make all their decisions on their own and, therefore, the word that is used here is selah, and selah can also mean to despise, to ridicule. Therefore, they were, in effect, ridiculing the Torah, as many times we find Jewish people even to this day do. In fact, Woody Allen in his movies, and that is why I never liked Woody Allen, any time he wanted to show hypocrisy or cast an unfavorable light on religion he would show a rabbi in Chassidic garb. He would make fun of his own people. In a certain sense, this is what was happening now, too, so Moshe was to take this staff and to show them that Judaism would enhance their life, cause their life to blossom. It may not make them richer financially, but it would help them immeasurably spiritually and psychologically and mentally. Therefore, his method should have been to show them the beauty of Judaism but, instead, he reverted to his old ways and that was to be very negative and to, so to speak, beat them with the staff, to prod them, to push them, to make them do things. In fact, this same technique is used today when many rabbis get up and blast the people. They say you should not do this

and if you do this you are violating this law of the Torah and this is bad, and some rabbis even want to put people in Cheren and so forth and so on. That just will not work with an independent thinking generation. This will maybe only work when 99% of the Jewish people observe Jewish law so any deviation can be put down by negative type of talk, but that is not going to help today, so you tell people that they are violating the Torah. You tell people that they are violating their tradition of 3000 years, and they say, so what? What do they care if they are doing it or not doing it? Sometimes it will have the exact opposite effect. Even though they at one time did not even think they were going to violate this prohibition now that the rabbi said that you definitely cannot violate it then they will violate it sometimes on purpose. Therefore, when you are dealing with independent minded people you have to be positive. You have to show them the beauty of Judaism. You have to show how Judaism causes your life to flower and blossom, and that is why G-d said to Moshe Rabbeinu because you have failed to sanctify Me among the Jewish people you are using wrong techniques here.

We all mark and lament the passing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe this past week, and there is one thing that we have to give the Lubavitcher Rebbe credit for, and that is that his approach to all Jewish people was positive. He never stressed the negative. He always stressed the positive. In fact, at our recent convention there was a talk given by a man named Kann who represents a PR agency, and he told us that he had advised even the Lubavitch how to go about making some of their PR. He told us that the difference between PR and propaganda is that propaganda is false. When you say a lie over and over again it is propaganda. You twist things and make falsehoods out of them. He also said that there is a difference between advertising and PR. Advertising requires a lot of money and people who spend \$20,000 on an ad in the "New York Times" are wasting their money because advertising has no effect unless it is repetitive day in and day out. There is something else called PR which are contrived news events. You know that the airwaves

are constantly looking for news. Every hour on the hour there is news, and on CNN there is news on 24 hours a day. People are always looking for events in order to highlight. This is contrived news, and this is what PR people do. They call news conferences and announce certain things which are interesting because of the way they are presented, not necessarily because they are new. For example, he told us that when the Lubavitcher Rebbe decided he wanted to highlight Chanukah that is when all of a sudden they decided to light these huge menorahs and they got the President of the United States to light the official menorah of the United States. This was something new. There was nothing new about lighting a menorah on Chanukah, but the way he did it and the context in which he did it was new. He told us how once during the Lebanese Civil War a couple came who were publishing one of the leading dailies in Beirut and they were complaining how the Moslems were treating them and persecuting them and hounding them and taking away their free speech and property and nobody would listen to them. They went to this agency and they said they should write a letter to the UN and present it to Mayor Dinkins, and with Mayor Dinkins you should go to the UN and read it, and, sure enough, that is what they did and they got a lot of publicity. Before the UN would not even listen to them. It depends on how you present ideas. He said it was the same thing with Chanukah. You know at Christmas time on Fifth Avenue in New York there are all sorts of decorated windows that are great tourist attractions, so he told the Lubavitch Rebbe he should have a Chanukah house which depicted Jewish scenes of Chanukah and he should dedicate it formally, and also he should send toys from this Chanukah house to the children of Chernobyl who were injured by the terrible atomic reactor disaster there and it would raise the consciousness of the people about Chanukah because it would be covered by the newspaper and all the press. The Lubavitch wanted to reach those Jews, and more than half of the Jews of the United States are unaffiliated, to let them know about Chanukah. This, of course, can be replicated throughout all the different holidays, so you have to sanctify

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G-d's name in public and you do it by showing how Judaism adds to their life spiritually and emotionally and mentally. This is, of course, very very important. This is what we all have to do, especially in America today, if we are going to capture the attention of the young people and allow them to delve once again into the sources of Judaism. You have to capture their attention first, though. You have to show them how Judaism is beautiful and inspiring, and that, of course, is the way that we can attract independent minded people.

I am reminded of the story they tell about the deputy director of the New York harbor. The New York harbor was a plum federal appointment. During the time of Calvin Coolidge the director of the New York harbor died and the deputy director (this was a Saturday night) decided he had to call the President immediately and tell him what happened. He got the White House operator and she said she could not put him through because it was the middle of the night and the President was sleeping. He told her it was an emergency and he would report her because it was a matter of national urgency. She put him through and a sleepy Calvin Coolidge picked up the phone and he said, "Mr. President, I have the sad duty to report to you that the director of the New York harbor has died." Calvin Coolidge said he was very sorry to hear that and could he do anything else for him. The man said, "Yes, there is. I would like to take his place." Calvin Coolidge thought a minute and said, "Well, it's okay with me as long as it's okay with the undertaker." We all have to realize that unless we want to bury Judaism we have to use the right techniques in order to present it. You cannot present Judaism in a negative way. You have to present Judaism in a positive way, and we have to take every opportunity we possibly can to tell people how it really enhances their life, and if we can demonstrate to people how it can enhance their life, show how it causes their life to flower and bloom and that it is an added dimension to their life, how keeping Shabbos and the holiday and the mitzvahs adds so much to their life, then we can rest assured that we will be able to raise up a generation that is even more committed

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to Judaism than we are. Let us all hope and pray that we will do so so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.

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CHUKAS

In the Torah portion Chukas we learn about Moshe Rabbeinu's sin, how Moshe Rabbeinu struck the rock instead of talking to it. Why did Moshe do this? What caused him to strike the rock? We all know that in life it is very difficult to make decisions. We know life isn't logical. You can't just make decisions based on logic because logic is only a tool; it depends on assumptions you make. If you start with bad assumptions, then logic will lead you to bad conclusions. You can have great analytical ability, but if your assumptions are wrong then your conclusions can be murderous.

Everyone on Hitler's Cabinet had a PhD, except one. Once they accepted the assumption that Jews were subhuman, and agents of the Devil, then it was logical to have the Jews exterminated. After all, don't we exterminate cockroaches and rats that infest our houses?

Life is not a logical thing. That is one of the reasons this Torah portion started by teaching the laws of the red heifer. These laws are not logical.

All those who had a hand in preparing the red heifer became ritually unclean. All those who were ritually unclean became clean when the ashes of the red heifer were sprinkled on them. Not everything in life is logical.

How could a great, righteous king like Cheeskeeyahu come from such a

wicked father, king Ahaz? Or how could Abraham come from the evil Terach?

When we make decisions, it's not enough to use logic. Many Americans today say we have to trust our feelings. We should make decisions based on whether or not it feels good. This is absurd, because feelings are not always accurate or responsible. For example, if your baby begins to cry in the middle of the night, and you don't feel like getting up, does that mean you should not? So many young people are in bad marriages because it felt right, even though everybody warned them about their spouses. Feelings many times let you down.

When we make decisions, we should consider logic and feelings, but we need the Torah. A person considering logic alone will be misled, and so will a person who considers feeling alone. The Jewish people were feeling terror in the desert as they ran out of water. Miriam had always been there to help and comfort them. Relying on their feelings, they lambasted Moshe. Moshe was the epitome of Torah. We talk about Moshe Rabbeinu, Moshe our teacher, but for some reason he too responded by only considering his feelings. He shouted at the people, "Here, rebels, from this rock I will bring forth water." Moshe lost his temper. This teaches us that even a man of Moshe's stature, when he gives in to feelings alone, can make mistakes.

We need to put things in perspective. We need the Torah to make decisions that are right. Logic alone is not enough, and neither are feelings. But if we consult the Torah and draw on its wisdom and assumptions about life, then, combined with feelings and logic, we can make the right decisions.

I'm reminded of a story they tell about a coach who had a horrible season.

His team won two games and lost eight games. He was hired on for only one more year. At a press conference the reporters asked him, "Who are you going to get rid of? The fullback, the halfback, or the quarterback?" The coach replied, "None of those. I'm going to get rid of my drawbacks."

May we all hope and pray that we make decisions not based on emotions and logic, but also on the Torah's ideals and assumptions, so that we can all have good lives and Moshiaic can come quickly in our day. Amen.