Points to Ponder

Chukas 5779

**זֹ֚את חֻקַּ֣ת הַתּוֹרָ֔ה This is the Chukah of the Torah (19:2)-** Shlomo HaMelech noted that he decided that he would wise and understand the rules of the Parah Adumah but he was not able to. It was full of contradictions. He could not explain how that which made some Tahor made otherts Tamai. It didn’t make sense. **Rav Schachter Shlita** told us that like those who try to understand quantum physics and understand that the more that they get the theories, the less they understand it. Anyone claiming to fully get it without dizziness is likely not speaking from knowledge. Rav Schachter told us that the same was true about religion. Religion will not resolve any contradictions at all! If anything it will make us aware of more contradictions. Parah Adumah is not the only instance of the contradictory nature of Halacha. The parsha opens with the statement, "This is the chukah of the Torah." All of the Torah is one big chukah; the entire creation is one vast chukah. The midrashim on the opening passuk in Breishis make the comment that Hashem looked into the Torah and used it as a blueprint for creation. All of nature is interconnected with Torah. Just as the study of physics guides us to maneuver with all the contradictions in the natural realm, so too the halachah guides us in how we should deal with contradictions in the spiritual realm.

**זֹ֚את חֻקַּ֣ת הַתּוֹרָ֔ה This is the Chukah of the Torah (19:2)** - Why do we note that this is the Chok of the Torah? It is the Chok of the Parah but not the Torah? **Rav Elchanan Wasserman ztl** **HyD**  explained that there are 2 criteria of Chukim -- they have no reason and they apply forever. The same is true for Torah -- that which we do not know, we will still continue to observe -- no matter what!

**וְהִזָּ֤ה הַטָּהֹר֙ עַל־הַטָּמֵ֔א The Tahor shall sprinkle onto the Tamai (19:19)** - The Yirushalmi (Parah 3:4) quotes Rabbi Yehoshua ben Kavsee  who noted that he always assumed that one Tahor can sprinkle onto one Tamai but he later learned that a single Tahor can sprinkle onto many Temeiim. **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** noted that there are 2 concepts of Tahara -- Hazaah and Mikvah. The first involves a single drop while the other involves immersing the whole body. It is a fitting description of the Jew’s quest of Tahara -- it begins with someone’s sprinkling of a single drop and it can bring many to the point of immersing themselves into a life of Tahara.

**וַתָּ֤מָת שָׁם֙ מִרְיָ֔ם וַתִּקָּבֵ֖ר שָֽׁם: Miriam died and there was no water (20:1-2) - Rashi** explains that the Zechus of the Beer was Miriam’s. Why? **Rav Chaim Kamil ztl** explained that when Miriam remained to see what would happen to baby Moshe, she taught a valuable lesson -- that more than the person makes the story, the story makes the person. She was the one who remained to see what would be of her Nevuah. She was the one who wanted and believed in the Moshian Shel Yisrael and waited with bated breath to know where his next step would be nurtured. The Be’er also sustained the people -- just as she did with Moshe.

**וַיַּ֧ךְ אֶת־הַסֶּ֛לַע  And he struck the rock (20:11) - Rashi** explains that his error was that he struck the rock instead of speaking to it. **Sivan Rahav Meir sh’Tichyeh** notes the parallel between that point in time and ours. Water often symbolizes Torah. When our hearts are stone but have water waiting to be released on the other side, we need to remember that in today’s generation coaxing it out with words instead of the switch is likely to bring

**וְהַפְשֵׁ֤ט אֶת־אַֽהֲרֹן֙ אֶת־בְּגָדָ֔יו וְהִלְבַּשְׁתָּ֖ם אֶת־אֶלְעָזָ֣ר בְּנ֑וֹ וְאַֽהֲרֹ֥ן יֵֽאָסֵ֖ף Remove his clothes (20:26) -** We call Aharon’s death a death of Neshika. What is the death of Neshikah? The Talmud (Kesubos 104a) notes that everyone who uses the language “Nach Nafsheih” in regard to the death of a true Tzaddik  should be stabbed. Why? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky ztl** explains that in the regular course of events, death represents a painful departure of soul and body as a result of the battle in the time of separation. One is not allowed to say that about a Tzaddik. That is the meaning of Meisas Neshika.

**אָ֚ז יָשִׁ֣יר יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָ֖ה הַזֹּ֑את Then the Jewish people sang (21:27)** - Why isn’t Moshe’s name mentioned in this song like it is in the song at Yam Suf? **Rav Yissochar Frand Shlita** explained that while Bnei Yisrael didn’t appreciate the benefit of the Beer fully until Miriam died, Moshe DID recognize the value. As a result, this song was specifically primarily Bnei Yisrael’s.

**Haftara: Yiftach ran away from his brothers and settled in in Eretz Tov (Shoftim 11:3)** - The sefer **Ir Damesek Eliezer** explains that while Yiftach could’ve made a legitimate claim and sued his brothers in court, he ran away from Machlokes which is why the Novi uses the words “ran away” in describing his move to Eretz Tov. Tov, is the absence of Machlokes. **Rav Binyomin Eisenberger Shlita** added that many different families have been torn apart as a result of the Machlokes. We would do well for ourselves learning from the example of Yiftach.