

INCOMPREHENSIBLE BUT DEFENSIBLE



YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Chukas

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Dasan & Aviram Despised Moshe

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The Death of Miriam Juxtaposed Next to the Red Heifer

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The New Generation Realized Miriam's Value in Retrospect

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The Whisperings of the Nations & G-d's Decrees

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Indiscriminate Kindness Transitions Into Worthiness

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1. When Moshe drew water from the rock in the 40th year it was not only for the people but even for the livestock.
2. Midrash: G-d providing water even for livestock indicates that He is concerned for the possessions of the Jews.
3. The water ceased to flow in the fortieth year when Miriam passed away.
4. Until the 40th year the wellspring gave forth sufficient water even for the livestock indicating that G-d is concerned for the possessions of the Jews.
5. If this is so, why is G-d's consideration only displayed in the fortieth year?
6. Shelah Hakadosh: The Exodus From Egypt was due to G-d's indiscriminate kindness.
7. The Jews in Egypt were not worthy of redemption because they were pagans.
8. G-d employed his attribute of Chesed. The emergence of a Jewish People was the equivalent of creation.
9. A new existence was about to begin.
10. Psalms: The world was built on Chesed.
11. G-d had no reason to create existence other than His attribute of Chesed.
12. When the Jews left Egypt, all amenities to exist were provided including water for their livestock.
13. However, the 40th year when the water ceased to flow & then was reinstated, providing sufficient water for the livestock shows G-d's concern for their possessions.

An Enigma Elicits Universal Derision

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1. The law of the Red Heifer is classified as a statute.
2. It is a law that can not be understood within a rational context.
3. An example of this would be dietary laws and the prohibition to wear a combination of wool & linen.
4. Every level of spiritual contamination is relieved when immersing oneself in a mikvah.
5. To be relieved of the contamination of the dead one must undergo the ritual of the Red Heifer.
6. The Red Heifer with all its details and application is referred to as the (ultimate) statute.
7. Rashi: "It is my decree you are not permitted to reflect upon it.
8. Satan and the nations deride the Jewish People by saying, "What is this all about?"
9. King Solomon, the wisest of all men, says although he understands all statutes, the statute of the Red Heifer is beyond him.
10. It is inherently enigmatic: it purifies the contaminated and contaminates the pure.
11. There are other statutes that have a semblance of this and we are aggrieved because of this.
12. The derision is not rooted in the statutory nature of the law, but rather the contradictory factor.

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Approbation Seen As Condemnation

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1. Miriam was not eulogized when she passed away.
2. Kli Yakar: G-d caused the wellspring to cease so that they should understand that the wellspring was in her merit.
3. The water ceasing to flow was G-d's eulogy to Miriam.
4. How did they not appreciate who Miriam was?
5. Miriam, a Prophetess, was a midwife who defied Pharaoh & sang the Song of the Sea with the women.
6. When she spoke critically of Moshe she became a leper.
7. A leper, after recovering, remains outside of all the camps for seven days.
8. Midrash: The Divine Presence, Hashem, the Clouds of Glory, 600,000 men above the age of 20 – waited 7 days for Miriam to return.
9. The Jewish People's perception of G-d's dictate was to disgrace Miriam.
10. If G-d did not want to disgrace her – they would have traveled, unaware of Miriam's predicament.
11. G-d, by withholding the water, revealed that the wellspring was in her merit; their perception of Miriam was jaundiced.
12. Though embarrassed, nevertheless she is the model for all to understand the severity of negative speech.
13. It is a positive commandment to remember what G-d had done to Miriam.

Associations Determine Standards Of Evaluation

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1. When the Jewish People approached the Edomite border G-d said to Moshe, "Your brother Aaron will pass away."
2. Rashi: "When The Jews attached themselves to Esav, the evil one, their actions were breached."
3. If the association with Edomite precipitated sinful behavior it is understandable.
4. There is no mention of sin; Jews were not minimized– why should Aaron die?
5. G-d rewards the evil in this world for their good deeds so they should go into the oblivion when they pass on.
6. The domain of the nations is the physical world; the world to come is the domain of the Jew.
7. The Edomites, the counterforce to the Jew, were blessed by their forefather, Yitzchok, to have great wealth.
8. In essence, their empowered material state is the application of the attribute of Justice.
9. When the attribute of Justice is in place, the evaluation of deeds is exacting to the degree of perfection.
10. The devout are not sufficiently righteous.
11. When the Jewish People were in the proximity of Esav, the evil, they were in the area of the attribute of Justice – causing their actions to be breached.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Chukas



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One's Linkage to Eternity

Torah: Only the Priest (*Kohen*) is qualified to remove the spiritual contamination of the dead from an individual or object through the ritual of the Red Heifer (*parah aduma*).

Gemara in Tractate *Avoda Zorah*: After the Jewish people had accepted the *Torah* with their unequivocal declaration of “*Naaseh V’nishma* – we will do and then we will listen,” they were reinstated to a level of spiritual perfection that had existed before the sin of *Adam*. Before *Adam* had partaken of the Tree of Knowledge, he was not subject to death. It was only after *Adam* had eaten of the Tree that death was decreed upon man. Similarly, had the Jewish people not sinned with the Golden Calf, they would have remained at the level of *Adam* before the sin and thus would have not been subject to death. It was only because they had regressed spiritually was death reintroduced to them. Thus, they became finite beings.

Rashi on *Chukas* citing *Rav Moshe HaDarshon*: The ritual of the Red Heifer can be explained with a parable. A young child of one of the maidservants had soiled the palace of the king. The king, realizing this, ordered the mother of the child to clean up after him. Similarly, the Red Heifer, which is the mother of the calf, was designated by G-d to cleanse the spiritual contamination that was brought about by its offspring, the (Golden) calf. The Red Heifer was provided to correct the negative effect of the sin of the Golden Calf, which was the reintroduction of death and its contamination. Why was death a direct outgrowth of *Adam*'s eating of the Tree of Knowledge? Why was it subsequently an outgrowth of the sin of the Golden Calf?

G-d is referred to as “The Living King, Who is the life of all existence/worlds.” Whoever fully cleaves to Him becomes part of eternity and the infinite, which is G-d Himself. *Adam*, who was the handiwork of G-d,

was attached to the infinite source of life, therefore he was not subject to limitation and was meant to live forever. However, after he had eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, which was a detachment from G-d, because he transgressed His Will, became subject to death. When G-d had given His *Torah* to the Jewish people, He had given them the component that would give them the ability to fully attach themselves to Him. He had given them His Infinite Wisdom.

Proverbs: “The *Torah* itself is a tree of life for those who hold on to it.”

Zohar: “The Jewish people, the *Torah*, and G-d are one.” When the Jewish people were given the *Torah* at Sinai they became intertwined with G-d, Who is the source of eternity. This is the reason that at Sinai, the Jewish people had been overcome the deficiency of death that *Adam* had introduced through his sin. They once again were able to fully cleave to G-d and thus became eternal beings who were part of the Infinite.

Proverbs: “A three-ply thread does not tear” King Solomon is referring to the three holy Patriarchs who are the invincible foundation of the Jewish people. *Yaakov*, our Patriarch personified *Torah* study and thus he was the one to coalesce all that had preceded him.

As a result of the Jewish people being involved with the idolatry of the Golden Calf after they had received the *Torah*, they detached themselves from G-d. They had in essence done what *Adam* had done. They detached themselves from the source of life, thus causing them to be finite and subject to death. When *Moshe* had come down from the mountain and had seen the Jewish people engaged in the sin of the Golden Calf, he smashed the Tablets containing the Ten Commandments that G-d had given him.

Chazal: The fiery letters that were emblazoned on the Tablets ascended heavenward. What is the symbolism of the letters floating upward? It represents the forgetting of the *Torah*. Had *Moshe* never smashed the Tablets, one would never forget the *Torah* that he had studied. Therefore, one needs to continuously study and review the *Torah*, as it is stated in *Rambam*, “Until the last moment of one’s life.”

Moshe chose to break the Tablets because if he had not done so, the Jewish people would have needed to be destroyed. Their transgression with the Golden

Calf after the Sinai event, when they had become G-d’s people, would have been the equivalent of the bride committing adultery under the marriage canopy (*chupah*). The breaking of the Tablets, which were the equivalent of the marriage contract between G-d and the Jewish people, was a termination of their relationship. Although they were no longer culpable for destruction, they nevertheless needed to be punished for their sin.

The concept of forgetting is a phenomenon that has no relevance in the spiritual realm. The Jewish people, when they were fully rooted and attached to G-d, existed within a spiritual context. Therefore, anything that they would have studied would have been retained eternally. However, because they had failed and had become finite beings, they became subject to all the effects of physical existence. The Jew must therefore continuously dedicate himself to the study and review of the *Torah*.

The contamination of the dead is the most intense level of spiritual contamination. It is because it is a consequence of detaching oneself from G-d. The only way one can be relieved from this intense level of contamination is through the ritual of the Red Heifer which is administered by the *Kohen*, who is the one who is responsible for the transmission and dissemination of *Torah* to the Jewish people.

Malachi: “The lips of the *Kohen* shall safeguard knowledge. You shall seek *Torah* from his mouth. Because he is an agent of G-d...” Only the *Kohen* could administer the Red Heifer because he did not participate in the sin of the Golden Calf. The tribe of *Levy* was only subject to death because they are part of the Jewish people. He did not become detached from G-d due to his own actions but rather only as a consequence of the people’s failing.

The Compatibility of the Jew to the Torah Itself

Torah in *Chukas*: Regarding the *mitzvah* of the Red Heifer, “*Zos Chukas ha’Torah adam ki yamus b’ohel...*” This is the Statute of *Torah*, (when) a man dies in the tent...” The *Torah* tells us that the ritual of the Red Heifer purifies the one who is spiritually contaminated and causes the one who is pure to become impure. This *mitzvah* is the ultimate Statute. Its infrastructure

can only be understood by the Divine. King Solomon, who was the wisest man to ever live was not able to comprehend the rationale of the Red Heifer, although he was able to understand the rationale for all of the other statutes. Regarding the Red Heifer he said, "It is beyond me..." What is innate in this statute that causes it to be unfathomable?

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: "Why does the *Torah* refer to the statute as 'the statute of the *Torah*' rather than the statute of purity or impurity?" Before the Jewish people left Egypt, G-d commanded them to bring a Pascal Sacrifice (*Korban Pesach*). If one is spiritually contaminated, he is not qualified to participate in the consumption of sacrificial meat. There is no mention, before the Jewish people had left Egypt, that they needed to purify themselves before engaging in the Pascal Sacrifice.

When the Jewish people were in Egypt, their classification was "Noahide." They did not assume the status as Jews until after the *Torah* was given at Sinai. A gentile/Noahide is not susceptible to spiritual contamination. These laws only pertain to an individual who is a Jew. As a result of receiving the *Torah* at Sinai, the Jewish people had ascended to a spiritual level that allowed them to have relevance to the infinite.

Because their spirituality was expanded and transformed they were thus susceptible to spiritual contamination. It was the Jewish people's relevance to the *Torah* itself that caused them to be susceptible to spiritual contamination and thus requiring them to attain spiritual purity through the Red Heifer. In essence, when the *Torah* states, "This is the Statute of the *Torah*" it is telling us that this particular Statute is a direct consequence of what had transpired at Sinai.

Gemara in Tractate *Chagiga*: A gentile who engages in *Torah* study is liable for the death penalty. It is because the *Torah* is considered to be the "betrothed" of *Yaakov*. As the *Torah* states, "The *Torah* was commanded by *Moshe*. It is the "*morashah* (heritage)" of *Yaakov*..." The word should not be read "*morasha*" but rather "*me'orasa*" which means, "betrothed." When a gentile engages in *Torah* study, it is the equivalent of engaging with another's betrothed, which is considered adultery. Only the Jewish people, because of their dimension of spirituality were qualified to receive the *Torah* from G-d. Their souls

had the ability to ascend to this special level because they descended from the holy Patriarchs *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*.

Eyov: "The *Torah* is longer than the earth and broader than the ocean." Since *Torah* is a manifestation of G-d's Wisdom, it is infinite. The spirituality of the Jew is compatible to the spirituality of the *Torah*. It is because of this that the Jew can only perfect his soul through the observance of the 613 *mitzvos* of the *Torah*. The ultimate objective of one perfecting his spirituality is to be able to cleave to G-d, Who is Infinite.

Mishna in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: "Every Jew has a share in the world to come." This based on what had transpired at Sinai. The only relevance of the Jew to eternity is through the observance of the *Torah* itself. We are also able to understand what is stated in the *Mishna* in *Ethics of our Fathers*, "There is no reward for a *mitzvah* in this world." It is because the effect of performing a *mitzvah* is on an eternal plane.

Therefore, the reward cannot be given within a finite and limited context, which is physical existence. Since the purification process of the Red Heifer is rooted in the spiritual infrastructure of the Jewish soul, which corresponds to all aspects of the *Torah*, the rationale of this *mitzvah* cannot be fathomed, even by King Solomon. It is because of this that he said, "It is beyond me..."

Good Fortune is not Necessarily What is Seen by the Eye

Torah: "They journeyed from Kadesh and the Children of Israel arrived – the entire assembly – at Mount Hor. *Hashem* said to *Moshe* and *Aaron* at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, 'Aaron shall be gathered to his people (pass away), for he shall not enter the Land...' Why does the *Torah* need to mention the border of Edom in association with the passing of *Aaron*?

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "From here we see that because they had attached themselves and had become close to *Esav* the evil one, their actions were breached and thus they had lost this *tzaddik* (*Aaron*). When one attaches/associates himself with an evil person (*rasha*), one enters into a precarious state." Seemingly, the circumstances which caused the demise of *Aaron*

are not to be understood. There is no indication that as a result of being in the proximity of Edom that the Jewish people had failed spiritually to any degree. If so, why were their actions considered to be “breached?” Why are they in need of atonement, thus causing the *tzaddik* to be taken?

The Attribute of Justice is exacting to the ultimate degree. Unless one’s record is perfect, one cannot withstand the scrutiny of the Attribute of Justice. When one performs a *mitzvah*, although may have been meticulously executed with proper intent, most often it is only accepted by G-d because it is evaluated within the context of the Attribute of Mercy.

King Solomon in *Ecclesiastes*: “There is no *tzaddik* in the land who does good and does not sin.” The Attribute of Mercy allows the spiritual accomplishments of the Jewish people to not only be accepted by G-d, but also to be embraced by Him. However, if they were to be subject to the scrutiny of the Attribute of Justice they would have been rejected.

Chazal: *Yaakov*, our Patriarch and his brother *Esav* had divided existence between them. *Yaakov* had taken for himself the spiritual world and *Esav* had taken the physical. *Yaakov* told *Esav* that he was no interest in the physical world for its own sake, but rather only as a means to a spiritual end. In contrast, the physical world was the location in which *Esav* wanted to receive his reward because he had no interest in the spiritual.

Torah: If an evil person performs some good deed, albeit minor and miniscule, he is rewarded in this world because he has no relevance to the spiritual world to come. The reward for the *mitzvos* and good deeds of the Jewish people is reserved for the world to come (eternity).

Mishna in *Ethics of our Fathers*: “There is no reward for a *mitzvah* in this world.” Although *Esav* thrives and is empowered in this existence, his overwhelming bounty, which seems to be the ultimate in success, is in fact the basis for his destruction. In essence, it is the most level of Justice that is being meted out to him. After the evil person dies, he goes into spiritual oblivion, which is a state of unending suffering, and receives no reward in the world to come.

The Edomites, who are the descendants of *Esav* were continuously under the jurisdiction of the Attribute

of Justice because of their lack of relevance to the spiritual. When the Jewish people passed within the proximity of the border of the Edomites, they were in effect exposed to a location that was under the jurisdiction of the Attribute of Justice. The manifestation of this Attribute for the Jew and the Edomite expresses itself differently.

For the Edomite, it is the ultimate level of material bounty and power. For the Jew, it means that his record will be scrutinized to the ultimate degree. The spiritual record of the Jew that was initially seen as exemplary under the Attribute of Mercy, will be seen as deficient under the Attribute of Justice. This new level of scrutiny brought about intense prosecution against the Jewish people. Therefore, G-d took the *tzaddik*, *Aaron* as an atonement for them.

Chazal: “The passing of a *tzaddik* is an atonement for the Jewish people.”

Faith, the Mainstay of Stability and Happiness

Torah: After *Aaron* passed away, the Clouds of Glory that had protected the Jewish people in the desert had dispersed.

Gemara in Tractate *Taanis*: The Clouds of Glory were in the merit of *Aaron*. The Canaanite king of Arad, realizing their vulnerability and exposure, attacked the Jewish people. The people took a vow that if G-d were to allow them to be victorious over the king of Arad, they would consecrate all of the spoils and not partake of them.

Torah: “*Hashem* heard the voice of Israel, and He delivered the Canaanite...” After their victory, the Jewish people traveled the circuitous route bypassing the land of Edom. Because they were not permitted to pass through it, “...the spirit of the people grew short on the way. The people spoke against G-d and *Moshe*: ‘Why did you bring us up from Egypt to die in this Wilderness, for there is no food and no water, and our soul is disgusted with this insubstantial food?’”

As a result of their ingratitude, G-d sent fiery serpents against them. The punishment for their ingratitude was measure for measure. Just as the original snake, in the Garden of Eden was an ingrate and spoke against G-d, so too G-d sent snakes to punish the Jewish

people whose behavior was that of an ingrate. The fact is, the Jewish people did have food and water. They were sustained by the wellspring of *Miriam* and the *Manna*. If so why did they complain in this manner?

The Jewish people became frustrated when they needed to take the circuitous route around the land of Edom. After the victory against the king of Arad, they believed that they would enter into the Promised Land without delay. However, after they were told that they were not permitted to enter into the Edomite territory, they were disappointed and thus became frustrated. As a result of this setback, "the spirit of the people grew short." Because they could no longer tolerate their predicament, they began to complain against G-d. Rather than appreciating the unlimited blessing that He provided for them, they became frustrated and angry. Frustration stems from a lack of faith/trust in G-d and consequently brings one to anger and irrational behavior.

Torah in Parshas Bo: "Say to the Children of Israel: 'I am *Hashem*, and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt...' *Moshe* was sent by G-d to be the Redeemer of the Jewish people. He had substantiated his credibility through the miracles that he had performed before them. Despite the fact that they had believed that he was G-d's agent to take them out of bondage, nevertheless, "*Moshe* spoke accordingly to the Children of Israel, but they did not listen to *Moshe* because of shortness of wind (*kotzer ruach*) and hard work."

Because the Jewish people were given the responsibility to meet impossible quotas by their Egyptian taskmasters, they were unable to acknowledge or comprehend *Moshe's* words regarding their imminent redemption. Because they were overwhelmed with something that was beyond their capacity, they were not receptive to *Moshe*. If the Jewish people had sufficient faith in G-d, internalizing the fact that everything would evolve and happen as *Moshe* had said, they would have had the capacity to listen. Because of their untenable situation in Egypt, being at the mercy of their taskmasters, they could not process their situation rationally. However, this was not the case regarding the Jewish people in the desert.

The frustration of the Jewish people in the desert stemmed from their own lack of faith in G-d. If they had full trust in Him, they would have understood with

absolute clarity that it was only a matter of moments before they would enter into the Land. Because of their lack of faith, they envisioned that their fate would be similar to that of their parents – to perish in the desert. In addition, they had interpreted that which was the ultimate good as G-d's intent to destroy them. They had said that the *Manna*, which was not expelled from their bodies over all of the years in the desert, would ultimately cause their intestines to burst, and they would die. Their frustration caused anger, which allowed them to express themselves irrationally.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: "Whoever becomes angry, it is the equivalent of worshipping idolatry." Why is this so? When one is in a state of anger, one becomes vulnerable to the evil inclination. One's inclination could even influence him to engage in idolatry. This is the reason that anger is equated to idolatry. Despite all of the miracles that they had witnessed and of which they were beneficiaries, their anger caused them to speak out of turn by complaining against G-d. If they had sufficient faith in G-d they would have perceived their situation differently.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: *Rebbe Akiva* was traveling with a group of people. They were about to enter into a community before sundown, but were turned away by them. Consequently, they needed to spend the night in the forest. The group had a donkey that would assist them in traveling, a fire to illuminate the way, and a rooster to wake them up. While being in the forest, a wind came and extinguished the fire. When this happened, the people became overwhelmed with fear and bemoaned their fate. *Rebbe Akiva* calmed them by saying, "Whatever G-d does is for the best."

Shortly after the fire was extinguished a mountain lion came and killed the donkey. Their situation becoming more dire caused the people to believe that they were in a hopeless situation. *Rebbe Akiva* once again reassured them by saying, "Whatever G-d does is for the best." Soon after that a weasel came and killed the rooster. Once again the people complained and were reassured by *Rebbe Akiva*, "Whatever G-d does is for the best." They remained in the darkness of the forest for the remainder of the night.

The next morning, when they began to travel, they noticed items strewn along the road. They realized

that the community that had turned them away was massacred and pillaged by marauders. They understood at that moment that the experiences that they had believed to be tragic were in fact a blessing. Had the fire not been extinguished they would have been discovered and killed. Had the donkey and rooster not been killed, the marauders would have heard them and attacked. *Rebbe Akiva* said to them, "Did I not tell you that whatever G-d does is for the best?"

When one is confronted with difficult situations in life, one attempts to interpret them in some manner. Very often, one cannot understand the cause of events. Even if he should come upon an understanding, it may not be to his satisfaction, thus causing him to become depressed and angry. The Jewish people, because of their lack of faith, believed that they also would experience the same dire outcome as the generation that had left Egypt.

Consequently, they began to complain against G-d and *Moshe*, rather than understanding that whatever He does is for the best. If they had a sufficient level of faith, they would have appreciated the value of the Manna, which was truly a blessing. On the contrary, they perceived it as "insubstantial food" that would ultimately take their lives. They were only ingrates because they were unable to see the Divine blessing that G-d had provided for them.

The Profound Effect of a Miracle

Torah: After *Miriam* passed away, the wellspring, which came about in her merit, no longer gave forth water. The Jewish people began to complain to *Moshe* that they did not have any water. "*Hashem* spoke to *Moshe* saying, 'Take the staff and gather together the assembly...You shall bring forth for them water from the rock and give drink to the assembly and their animals.'" The verse could have simply stated, "You shall bring forth water from the rock." Why does the verse state "You shall bring forth for them water...?" Seemingly the words "for them" are superfluous.

Ramban: "G-d specified that *Moshe* should extract the water from the rock 'for them' to indicate that the entire Jewish people should witness the miracle that *Moshe* had brought about. G-d said to *Moshe*, 'You should personally oversee the partaking of the water and they should drink it in your presence so that they

should understand and appreciate the miracle that had taken place.' However, this did not happen.

"*Torah*: '...abundant water came forth and the assembly and their animals drank.' Because of their overwhelming thirst, the Jewish people threw themselves into the water and began to drink. They did not wait for *Moshe* to give them and their animals the water."

Ramban is teaching us a profound concept that it is not sufficient to witness a revealed miracle in order to appreciate its value. One must focus and reflect upon the fact that one is the beneficiary of the miracle that had just transpired. Although one may intellectually understand that a miracle had just occurred, he will not internalize and appreciate the fact that he is the direct beneficiary of the miracle unless at the moment that he benefits, he reflects upon the event.

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: *Chizkiyahu*, the king of Yehudah was qualified to be *Moshiach* and *Sancherev*, the Assyrian king was meant to be the Armageddon, (*gog umagog*). However, this did not happen. What was the basis for *Chizkiyahu's* disqualification?

Gemara: When *Chizkiyahu* assumed the throne, he assembled the entire Jewish people and placed a sword alongside a *Torah* scroll. He had given an ultimatum to the Jewish people, "You can either live by the *Torah* or be pierced by the sword." It was because of this mandate that the Jewish people became fully committed and engaged in *Torah* study. Within a period of two and a half years, even the women and children from *Dan* to *Beer-Shevah* were fully proficient in the laws pertaining to spiritual purity. The Jewish people were so preoccupied with their spiritual pursuits that they allowed the fruit of their vineyards to rot on the vine.

Gemara: *Sancherev*, the Assyrian king, came upon Jerusalem and the Temple with millions of troops with the intent to destroy it. His cavalry alone was so numerous that when the horses had crossed the Jordan they had removed all the water of the river to the point that it became a dry riverbed. In order not to distract the Jewish people from their *Torah* studies, G-d instructed the angel *Gabriel* to "sharpen his sickle." That night, the entire army of *Sancherev* was miraculously destroyed in an instant. The miracle that had taken place was in the merit of *Chizkiyahu's*

edict that the Jewish people needed to commit their lives to the *Torah* and its study.

The Jewish people were compensated multiple times over for all of the material losses that they had incurred due to their *Torah* studies with the spoils of the Assyrian army. They amassed unlimited amounts of wealth. Although G-d wanted to designate *Chizkiyahu* as *Moshiach*, the Attribute of Justice protested and claimed that he was not qualified. The claim against him was that after being a beneficiary of a miracle of such magnitude, *Chizkiyahu* should have said *shira* (praises to G-d). He should have sung the praises of G-d as *Moshe* had done after the splitting of the Sea. It was because of this claim that *Chizkiyahu* was disqualified.

It is understood that a person of *Chizkiyahu's* spiritual dimension understood and appreciated the miracle that had taken place. If so, then why did he and the Jewish people not sing G-d's praises?

Torah: G-d had said to the Jewish people that if they engage and toil in *Torah*, all the blessings will come upon them. They will be protected from their enemies. Understanding and internalizing this fact, *Chizkiyahu*

and the people felt that it was not necessary to sing praises because this was what was meant to happen. G-d was acting upon what He had promised. Despite *Chizkiyahu's* understanding, he was disqualified because it was considered a failing. Where did he fail?

One could say that the value of singing G-d's praises for what had taken place was so that the world at large could understand and realize that the Jewish people were beneficiaries of G-d's miracle. However, with the explanation of *Ramban*, we are able to understand the claim against *Chizkiyahu* on a more profound level. Although the miracle was obvious and *Chizkiyahu* certainly understood and appreciated it as such, it was necessary to focus at that moment and reflect upon the fact that he and the entire Jewish people were direct beneficiaries of G-d's Kindness. He needed to articulate all aspects of the miracle to fully be impacted by what had just occurred. This comes about through singing G-d's praises. Without this level of reflection and internalization one will not be changed by the miracle. This is the reason G-d wanted *Moshe* to extract the water for the Jewish people in their presence and they should benefit from it in his presence in order maximize on the effect of the miracle that had taken place.



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