

פרשת חקת / Parashat Chukat

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<http://www.matsati.com> | matsati@matsati.com

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How does Righteousness and Holiness work?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 19:1-22:1

הפטרה: Judges 11:1-33

הברית: John 3:10-21 Hebrews 9:11-28

החדשה

10 This week's parsha contains the story of the one thing Moshe and Aharon did that causes HaShem to not allow them to enter the Promised Land. Reading through the relevant text (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:1-13*) the question arises about what exactly it was that Moshe did wrong that caused him such a harsh punishment. In the Judaic classics we find a similar question on not
15 understanding exactly what Moshe did to warrant the punishment.

Rashi explains:

(יא) פנמים. לפי שבראשונה לא הוציא אלא * טיפין. לפי שלא צוה המקום להכותו אלא ודברתם אל הסלע, והמה דברו אל סלע אחר ולא הוציא, אמרו שמא צריך להכותו כבראשונה, שנאמר והכית בצור (שמות יז, ו), ונזדמן להם אותו סלע והכהו: (יב) יען לא האמנתם בי. גלה הכתוב ב שאלולי חטא זה בלבד י היו

Rashi explains that Moshe hits the rock instead of talking to it.

20 Other commentators for example, Ibn Ezra says that Moshe hits the rock twice instead of once. Rambam says that Moshe loses his temper and speaks harshly to the people. Rambam quotes Rabeinu Chananel explaining that Moshe's sin lies in his comments prior to hitting the rock. Instead of saying "can G-d get water from this rock?" he says "can we get water from this rock?" Does this suggest that he
25 and Aharon can somehow draw the water from the rock and not G-d?

To understand these differences in opinion and classical interpretations of the text in question let's look at *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:1-13* and point out the various points of contention amongst commentators:

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וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־הָעֵדָה מִדְּבַר־צִן בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן וַיָּשֻׁב כ
הָעָם בְּקָדֶשׁ וַתֵּמַת שָׁם מִרְיֹם וַתִּקְבֹּר שָׁם: וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם
לָעֵדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן: וַיָּרֶב הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר וְלוֹ גֹעַנֵנוּ בְּגֹעַ אַחֲיֵנוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְלָמָּה
הִבַּאתֶם אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־מִדְבַר הַזֶּה לְמוֹת שָׁם אֶנְחֵנוּ

The children of Israel complain again about it being better to have died with their brethren in Parashat Korach

5 וּבְעִירָנוּ: וְלָמָּה הֶעֱלִיתֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לְהֵבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם
 הָרַע הַזֶּה לֹא מִקּוֹם זָרַע וְתֵאנָה וְגַפְּנִי וְרִמּוֹן וּמִים אֵין לְשֵׁתוֹת:
 6 וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן מִפְּנֵי הַקָּהָל אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּפְּלוּ
 עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּרְא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם:
 7, 8 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: קַח אֶת־הַמַּטֵּה וְהַקָּהָל אֶת־
 הָעֵדָה אֶתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן אַחֲיֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל־הַסֵּלַע לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן
 מִיַּמֵּי וְהוֹצֵאתָ לָהֶם מִים מִן־הַסֵּלַע וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אֶת־הָעֵדָה וְאֶת־
 9 בְּעִירָם: וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמַּטֵּה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ:
 10 וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַקָּהָל אֶל־פְּנֵי הַסֵּלַע וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
 שִׁמְעוּנָא הַמְרִים **וּמִן־הַסֵּלַע הַזֶּה נוֹצֵא לָכֶם מַיִם:** וַיִּרְם
 מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַסֵּלַע בְּמִסְחוֹ פַעֲמֹתָיו וַיֵּצֵאוּ מִים רַבִּים
 12 וַתִּשֶׁת הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה
 וְאַל־אֲהַרְן: **יַעַן לֹא־הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**
 לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיֵא אֶת־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:
 13 הִמָּה מִי מְרִיבָה אֲשֶׁר־רָכְבוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדַּשׁ בָּם:

Moshe and Aharon run to the Ohel Moed rather than stand up for the Lord before the people.
 We can get water from this rock?
 Moshe answers harshly...
 "Because you did not believe me to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel..."

35 The scriptures say that Moshe and Aharon could have done something great by sanctifying HaShem in the eyes of the children of Israel. However they failed to do so and the Torah does not say exactly what was done wrong. I believe the key to understanding this is found in *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:12 But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'* (NASB)

40 To understand what it was that HaShem was saying Moshe and Aharon did wrong, they did not believe in him to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel. I believe the key is found in the Hebrew word for "sanctify." So, let's look at this Hebrew word and then we can discuss further why HaShem says they did not believe in him.

לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי

50 The root Hebrew word for "sanctify" (קדש) is found here in verse 20:12 in the Hiphil stem, infinitive construct. We have evidence for the infinitive construct seeing the hireq Yod stem vowel. It is the stem vowel that distinguishes the infinitive construct (הקטיל) from the Hiphil imperative masculine singular (הקטל). In the English language the infinitive is the basic form of a verb, without an inflection binding it to a particular subject or tense (normally occurring in English with the word to, as in to see, to ask). The Hiphil stem is used to express

55 a causative type of action with an active voice. With the lamed as a preposition

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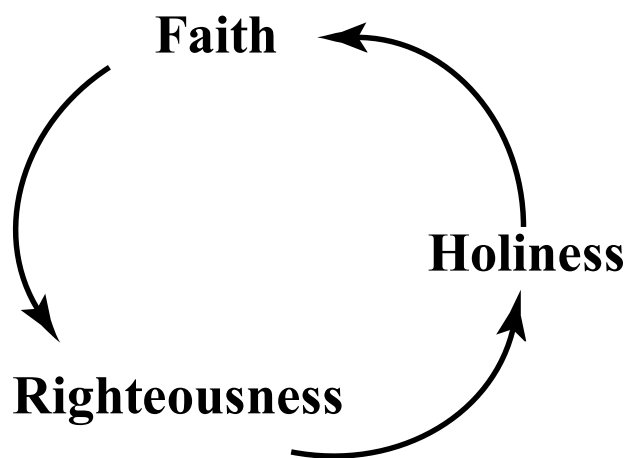
Holiness relating to sanctification requires a type of action

65 To understand the gravity of the situation here, and the reason for G-d's judgment on Moshe and Aharon that they would not enter the Promised Land we have to look closely at holiness, faith, and righteousness. I believe the concept of righteousness, holiness, and faith is slightly misunderstood in Judaism and in the church today. The problem I want to address specifically deals with the problems of completely spiritualizing holiness today, over against what we find in this week's parsha that Moshe and Aharon did not by their actions sanctify the Lord. Or in other words, they did not cause HaShem's name to be holy in the eyes of the children of Israel. There is a close knit inter-relationship between faith, righteousness and holiness but each has its own particular characteristics which restrict one from complete spiritualization. Let's start by looking at some definitions.

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The inter-relationship of Faith, Righteousness, and Holiness



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Definitions

- 85 • **Faith** is best described here in the Cetuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings)
 - *Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (NASB)*
- 90 • **Righteousness**
 - Righteousness is justification, the grounds, reason, basis upon which one is vindicated by G-d.

- **Holiness**

- The state or quality of being holy, integrity of purity, freedom from sin.

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So you may be asking at this time what I mean by “spiritualizing holiness.” I have had the opportunity to speak with some people from two communities.

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First the Christian church, I have been told that by faith in Yeshua the Messiah, we are not only counted righteous unto salvation, but also, we are holy and do not have to do anything necessarily speaking in the sense of walking holy before the Lord (and certainly not the Torah and its instruction for our lives). For further study see *Parashat Behar* and my comments on understanding the differences between a Greek versus a Hebrew mindset and the concept of ontology. (http://www.matsati.com/2007-2008/Parashat%20Behar%20_2007-2008_.pdf)

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The second community is the Messianic community. I have found some strongly imply, and even say, the people in the church’s refusal to observe the Torah, though they believe in Yeshua the Messiah, are not saved because they do not by the same spirit live obediently to the Lord. The crux (central point) of the argument is that by the same spirit we should all have similar convictions in relation to G-d’s instruction for our lives the Torah. So how do we deal with these drastic differences in biblical hermeneutics from these two communities who claim that Yeshua is the Messiah and that our sins are forgiven by faith in G-d’s Messiah and only in G-d’s Messiah?

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I believe it all comes down to our understanding of holiness. In the parsha, Moshe and Aharon did not by their actions make the name of the Lord holy before the people. By faith we are counted righteous, the application of righteousness is living a holy life in obedience to the Lord. Take for example in the Torah, G-d said to tell the congregation of Israel to be holy for I the Lord our God am holy.

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Leviticus 19:2

דַּבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיוּ כִּי קֹדֶשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַיְכָלִים:

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Leviticus 19:2

19”2 ‘Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. (NASB)

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Interestingly enough, we find the Apostle Peter also telling us that we need to be holy because it is written “be holy for I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:15-16

140 **פִּי אֱמֹת־קִדְשִׁים תִּהְיוּ בְּכָל־דַּרְכֵיכֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרָא אֶתְכֶם קְדוֹשׁ הוּא
פִּי כֵן כְּתוּב וְהִייתֶם קִדְשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי**

1Peter 1:15-16

145 *1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 1:16 because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'* (NASB)

150 The point I want to make is this, if we were already holy by faith, we would not have to be told to be holy again and again in the scriptures. This is because holiness is the practical application of our faith, and a changed life for Hashem is demonstrated in our holy living.

In this day and age where good sound biblical teaching is so lacking we need to be teachers, instructors, and educators of the truths found in the scriptures. For further study, see what I wrote about the characteristics of a good teacher.

155 (<http://www.matsati.com/What%20are%20the%20Characteristics%20of%20a%200Good%20Teacher.pdf>) Not whiners and complainers of what we might feel is lacking in someone else's life in their walk before the Most High God. Therefore, I would like to challenge you.

160 My challenge for the church today is this: look to G-d's Holy instruction for your lives today. In the Cetuvei Shelachim (Apostolic writings) the people were amazed at Yeshua's torah referring to his instruction (*Matt7:28 וַיְהִי כְּכַלּוֹת יֵשׁוּעַ
:אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּתְמַהוּ הַמּוֹן הָעָם עַל־תּוֹרָתוֹ*), he spoke and taught with authority. The Torah is G-d's instruction for our lives today the challenge is to strive to understand what it truly means to be a holy nation of priests in the Messiah Yeshua. There is a blessing here that you are missing out on; the blessing of of being liberated in the joy of the Lord in a good conscious before G-d. The Torah is not bondage under the law as is taught so often today.

170 My challenge for the Messianic community is this: try to remember what it was like when you were once without the Torah. A good teacher is one who is longsuffering just as HaShem is longsuffering with us. It is easy to judge another person's walk as less than adequate. Criticism is everywhere, television, radio, news paper, etc you name it ... we have been preconditioned to criticize others. You have a wonderful gift of knowing G-d and living in the joy of His instruction. Isn't it time to start sharing the joy of the Love of HaShem you have found in His Torah, and be teachers, instructors, and educators in patience and love rather than being so critical of someone's walk. Not to mention the danger of judging a person's heart and salvation in Yeshua the Messiah.

180 In this week's parsha Moshe and Aharon sin by not sanctifying the Lord by their faith in Him. The question is raised what exactly it was Moshe and Aharon did to warrant the harsh punishment? I say it doesn't matter what it was they did exactly; the point is we have to sanctify the name of the Lord in our lives on a

185 daily basis. We begin by placing our faith in Yeshua, G-d's Messiah, in that
Yeshua's blood was shed for our sins. Now, the role of sanctifying G-d's name in
our lives is a daily process while we persevere to live a life of obedience to
HaShem. I feel this is the true meaning of this week's parsha. Now get out there
and start living it!

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever