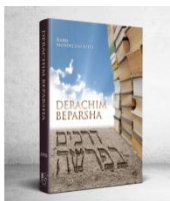


## דרכים בפרשה חקת

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**ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן יען לא האמנתם בי  
להקדישני לעיני בני ישראל לכן לא תביאו את הקהל הזה  
אל הארץ אשר נתתי להם**

*"And Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon, 'Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the presence of Bnei Yisroel; therefore, you will not bring this congregation into the land that I have given them'" (20:12)*

At Mei Meriva, Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon lost their chance to enter Eretz Yisroel. The pasuk tells us the reason: יען לא האמנתם בי להקדישני – you didn't trust Me enough to sanctify Me. They were told to speak to the rock, and instead, Moshe hit it. That moment, which could have been one of the greatest kiddush Hashem opportunities in history, was lost.

Rashi explains that Hashem wanted Moshe to speak to the rock so that Klal Yisroel would witness something astonishing. If even a dumb, lifeless rock, with no sechar and no onesh, listens to the dvar Hashem, how much more so should we? The lesson would have been so powerful, the Yidden would never have sinned again. But instead of speaking, Moshe hit the rock – and the moment slipped away.

Why was this taken so seriously? The seforim hakedoshim explain that it was because it happened publicly, in front of all of Klal Yisroel. A chillul Hashem in full view. That's how powerful a single missed opportunity can be. And that's how seriously we are meant to take chillul Hashem.

But a question arises. The rock still gave water – so why wouldn't that also teach the kal vachomer? A rock, which has no sechar and no onesh, is struck and responds – shouldn't that also drive the point home?

Rav Elya Svei zt"l answered this with a mashal. Think of a child being told to do something. If he listens just because his father asked, that's one level. If he only listens after a *potch*, that's another. Either way, the job gets done. But the message, and the growth from it, are completely different. The same is true here. Yes, the water came. Yes, there was a miracle. But it didn't penetrate the same way. The Yidden saw a result, but they missed the full impact. And that's what Moshe and Aharon were held accountable for.

And what was lost as a result? Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisroel. According to the Midrash, had he gone in, he would've built the Beis Hamikdash, and it would never have been destroyed. No churban. No golus. That's what was lost from this slight deviation. Just imagine:

this wasn't about a sin, or disobedience, or rebellion. It was about a lost *opportunity* to make the message sharper. And that, says the Torah, is לא קדשתם אותי.

Then Rav Elya added a layer that takes everything to the next level. The Yalkut Shimoni (Chukas 763) asks: what exactly was Moshe supposed to say to the rock? ודברתם – Chazal explain: שנה עליו פרק אחד – say a perek of Torah to it! That alone would have brought the water. Which means that Hashem wasn't just telling Moshe to speak – He was telling him to speak **Torah**. And the rock would have responded.

That would have been a moment Klal Yisroel would never forget. Moshe says a pasuk, and the rock gives water. No hitting, nothing dramatic — just Torah, and boom; the nature of the rock changes and water comes out. The kal vachomer becomes clear: if Torah can move a rock, it can move a Yid. It wasn't just about kiddush Hashem — it was about showing the raw power of Torah itself.

The Gemara in Berachos (28a) sheds light on this idea. When Rabban Gamliel was Rosh Yeshiva, he only accepted talmidim who were תוכם כבדם – whose insides matched their outsides. Then, after his disagreement with R' Yehoshua, the leadership changed. R' Elazar ben Azaria took over, and the doors opened wide. Anyone who wanted to learn was welcomed in. That very day, hundreds of benches were added. One of the outcomes was Maseches Ediyos.

At first, Rabban Gamliel had no regrets. He believed he was guarding the integrity of Torah. He didn't just want any regular yeshiva. For that they can go elsewhere. He wanted the teach Torah to the most elite *bochurim*. But as time went on, he saw something remarkable. The new talmidim were changing. The more they learned, the more their middos changed. Slowly, they became תוכם כבדם. That's when Rabban Gamliel started to feel *charata*/remorse. Maybe he should have given them the chance. Maybe he underestimated what Torah could do.

The Chidushei HaRim explains: these weren't perfect people. But once they had exposure to Torah, Torah itself made them better. That's the lesson. We may not start out at the level we hope to be, but if we let Torah in, it shapes us. It transforms us.

That's what could've happened at Mei Meriva. It was the Torah that would have spoken to a rock – and the rock would have listened. Klal Yisroel would have seen that Torah is not just information. It's not just learning. It is life altering and reality-changing. It works on hearts and minds. If we give it room, Torah does the rest.

**מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,**