

Parasha Meditation Chukat

Bamidbar 19:1-21:35

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Actualizing our Trans-rational Latent *Emunah*

Introduction

Beyond Rational Logic

Parashat Chukat is about trans-rationally accepting Hashem's decrees through steadfast *emunah*. The word "*chukat*" from the root "*chok*" means "statute" – a law that cannot be fathomed by the human mind. The laws of the Red Heifer (*Para Aduma*), which opens our *parasha*, are likewise beyond rational logic. In our time and day, it is very difficult to obey laws that we don't understand. Even the words "to obey" and "commandment" grate our ears, and are no longer political correct. The *gematria* (numerical value) value of the word *chok* is 108. This is the same *gematria* as in the phrase "זה בכל לבבי" / *ze bechol levavi* – "this is with all my heart."¹ When our mind has reached its limit, and can no longer relate, that is when we need to apply our full heart in love and commitment.

Rocklike Obedience

By hitting the rock instead of talking to it, Moshe defied applying all his heart to fulfill Hashem commandment, thereby forfeiting a precious opportunity to teach the Jewish people about the importance of heartfelt desire to obey Hashem. Had Moshe spoken to the rock and had the rock brought forth water, Hashem would have been sanctified before the whole congregation. The Israelites would have understood that if this rock which cannot speak nor hear fulfills the bidding of the Omnipresent G-d, how much more must we!² Rocklike obedience derives from steadfast *emunah*. Hitting the rock was an expression of lack of *emunah* for which Moshe was criticized. "Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel..."³

Shining forth *Emunah* through the Clouds of Doubt

It takes more effort to hit the rock rather than talking to it. Moshe thought that the Jewish people were on a low level of *emunah* after their repeated complaining in the wilderness. Therefore, he assumed that they needed him to hit the rock twice corresponding to their low level of *emunah*. His main mistake was that he forfeited the opportunity to actualize the Israelites' latent *emunah*, by simply talking to the rock. Moshe failed to reveal the spark of complete trust (*bitachon*) buried within the inner dimension of the Jewish soul. Even when a Jew doesn't feel *emunah*, it is important to trust that the *emunah* exists deep down – engraved within the soul-root of every Jew – within our

¹ I found this *gematria* in Dr. Yisroel Sisskind's email comment to *Parashat Chukat*, July 2011.

² Rashi, *Bamidbar* 20:12.

³ *Bamidbar* 20:12.



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inherited spiritual genetics. Therefore, if we feel down and far from *emunah*, we must believe that we can believe. We can actualize our latent *emunah* by repeating over and over to ourselves: "Although I don't feel *emunah* right now, in the inner dimension of my soul I do believe!" Sometimes the clouds cover the light of *emunah*, which can be compared to the light of the sun. Even during a cloudy day the light of the sun is still not weakened. It is only the clouds that conceal its light. In the same way, even when we don't feel *emunah*, it is only the clouds of doubts that conceal it. However, in the inner dimension of our Jewish soul, complete *emunah* always shines like the sun on a clear day.⁴

The Iron Curtain of Anger

According to Rambam, Moshe's main sin was that he lost his patience and got angry with the children of Israel when he exclaimed: "Hear you now you rebels!"⁵ G-d reproached him for this, for it is inappropriate for a man of his stature to lose his cool before the entire community of Israel. This behavior constituted *chilul Hashem* (profanation of G-d), since Moshe was supposed to be the model of good conduct for all the people.⁶ Anger is an expression of lack of *emunah*. It constitutes an iron curtain against accepting Hashem's will through every challenge we face. Sure, people can be annoying, and things don't always go our way. However, rather than taking the staff in our own hand and hit with it, let us recognize Hashem's power which the staff represents, and accept what comes our way.

Meditation:

This meditation is designed to help strengthen your *emunah*, preventing anger and accepting Hashem's trans-rational commandments.

Close your eyes and make yourself comfortable in your seat. Breathe deeply several times and let out the air slowly.

1. Imagine breathing into your eyes three times, relaxing all tension from them, relax your eyes, relax them even more.
2. Allow the actions of your day or the previous day or two to flow through you, and think about a difficult situation that you have faced, where you began to lose it.
3. Go through what happened in your mind's eye. What did the person do or say that made you so upset? Which angry thought are you still harboring? Imagine your negative thoughts as clouds.
4. Allow the clouds of all your negativity to pass by you without hanging on to them. Breathe into each of them, slowly and relaxed. As you breathe, visualize each of the clouds dissolving, disappearing back into the bright blue sky.

⁴ *Netivat Shalom, Parashat Chukat*, p. 121.

⁵ *Bamidbar* 20:10.

⁶ *The Introductions of the Rambam, Shmoneh Perakim*, Chapter 4.



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5. Now go back to the last interaction you recall where you fell short. Accept yourself completely where you were at then.
6. Make a fist with your hand and rub you're your chest on the left side near your heart while reciting three times: "Although I feel/did/said/ X (fill in the blank) I still love and appreciate myself."
7. Now imagine what happened again, but this time, reconstruct your act in the scene to the ideal way you would have liked to see yourself speak/ behave.
8. Imagine a circle of light surround yourself acting/speaking the ideal way. This circle of light will guard the inner vision of your potential self, to bring you closer to fulfilling it, when the opportunity arises.
9. Now imagine a mitzvah from the Torah which is difficult for you to fulfill – A precept that doesn't make sense to you, or that you have a hard time with. Visualize how this mitzvah emerges from the light of the Almighty G-d.
10. Imagine Hashem's powerful light zapping up all your resistance to the particular mitzvah with which you have a hard time.
11. Now it is time to transform our mental attitude to learn to surrender. Recite in your mind's voice three times: "Oh Hashem, Thy will be done..."
12. Imagine yourself opening your hands to receive and accept the gift of this mitzvah with grace.
13. Mentally place it in your heart – and make a resolution to accept this mitzvah with your entire heart as you recite the following phrase three times: "זֶה בְּכָל לִבִּי" / *ze bechol levavi* – "this is with all my heart." When you are ready, you can return back into your life with renewed acceptance and peace.

Notes:

Even the master of all prophets stumbled in the matter of *emunah*, as it states in this week's parasha "Because you believed Me not..."⁷ Maharal explains that Moshe's anger derived from a lack of *emunah*. Steadfast *emunah* brings about song and happiness, thereby precluding anger. It was G-d's will that Moshe speak to the rock. Therefore, He had prepared the miracle that the rock would respond to speech, because He desired that the children of Israel accept His precepts and be drawn to G-d through happiness rather than through force. Witnessing the rock happily deciding "on its own" to produce water, when softly requested to do so, rather than being hit, would inspire the children of Israel to likewise happily decide to do Hashem's bidding without being forced to.⁸ May we walk along the path of the true way of *emunah*, which is only through good will and happiness!

⁷ Bamidbar 20:12.

⁸ Maharal, *Gevurat Hashem*, Chapter seven.

About Us



Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum, a native of Denmark, is Founder and Director of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Bible and Jewish Philosophy from Michlala Jerusalem College for Women, and a Masters of Art in Jewish History from Touro College. Chana Bracha also began her practice as a spiritual healer through Emuna, tefila and energy work. For more than two decades Chana Bracha has taught Bible studies with special emphasis on women's issues in Israel and the United States. She creates curricula emphasizing women's spiritual

empowerment through traditional Torah values. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin located in the Judean Hills of Israel offers a unique program to women of all ages and backgrounds to learn in a holistic Torah study environment that nurtures the mind, body and soul. Intensive textual study of Tanach, Halacha and Chassidut are woven together with creative spiritual expression, and connection with the land of Israel through organic gardening, herbology, Jewish sources of healing and sustainable living. Classes in Jewish mysticism, Chassidism and Jewish meditation are directed at the spiritual thirst so prominent in our times.

*In 2010 Rebbetzin Chana Bracha published her first book, *Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*.*

Chana Bracha has a married son and several granddaughters. She lives with her husband and younger son on the land of the Judean hills, Israel.

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or visit her blog: <http://rebbetzinchanabracha.blogspot.com/2010/11/emunah-healing-for-women.html>

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