

# WHAT WAS LOST BY FAILING TO SPEAK TO THE ROCK?

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Chukas

### What Was Lost By Failing To Speak To The Rock?

**By Rabbi Yissocher Frand**

---

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 289, Use of Unethical Medical Research. Good Shabbos!

---

Parshas Chukas contains the incident of Mei Merivah [Waters of Strife]. There is a wide disparity of opinion as to the exact nature of Moshe's aveyra [sin]. This aveyra cost Moshe the privilege of entering Eretz Yisroel. According to many commentaries, the aveyra was that Moshe hit the rock rather than speaking to it.

The obvious problem with this explanation is that there does not seem to be much difference between bringing forth water from a rock by hitting it, or by speaking to it. Why was it so important to speak to the rock? There was apparently some specific lesson that the people were supposed to learn when Moshe spoke to the rock. What was that lesson?

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, suggests that the lesson is that sometimes in life it is necessary to speak to rocks. Sometimes we need to speak to people who seem unreceptive to what we have to say. Sometimes we need to speak to a congregation or a community or a class and we feel that we are speaking -- if not to a rock, then at least -- to a wall. Rabbis have been doing this from time immemorial. This goes back to the days of the prophets. They speak, they speak, they speak and it is as if they are talking to a wall.

Even those people who do not have the opportunity to speak to a community or a congregation, may have the opportunity to speak to children. Sometimes talking to children can also feel like

talking to a wall. The intended message of talking to the rock was that it is necessary to speak to others, even if it seems like you are speaking to a rock. The Chofetz Chaim often said, "It is necessary to speak to the people, whether one thinks it helps or not. At least seeds are planted."

That is the nature of the business. Sometimes we speak to our children and we think that they are not listening, but we need to keep speaking. We need to keep the dialog open. The lesson of Mei Merivah was so important to the Jewish People because it taught that even when a person speaks to a rock -- sometimes there are results. This is a life-long lesson that we must always remember.

---

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com

Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org

---

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah CDs on the weekly Torah portion. The complete list of halachic topics for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

- Tape # 018 -- Rending Garments on Seeing Yerushalayim
- Tape # 063 -- Intermarriage
- Tape # 107 -- Rabbonim and Roshei Yeshiva -- Do Sons Inherit?
- Tape # 152 -- Halachic Considerations of Transplanted Organs
- Tape # 199 -- Stam Yeinam: Non Kosher Wines
- Tape # 245 -- Skin Grafts
- Tape # 335 -- Postponing a Funeral
- Tape # 379 -- The Jewish "Shabbos Goy"
- Tape # 423 -- Tefilah of a Tzadik for a Choleh
- Tape # 467 -- Detached Limbs and Tumah
- Tape # 511 -- Autopsies and Insurance
- Tape #555 -- Women Fasting on 17th of Tamuz, Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur
- Tape #599 - Blended Whiskey
- Tape #643 - Choshed Bekesherim and Daan L'kaf Z'chus
- Tape #687 - Water, Coffee and Tea
- Tape #731 - Shkia - 7:02: Mincha 7:00 A Problem?
- Tape #775 - Wine At a Shul Kiddush
- Tape #819 - Mayim Geluyim - Uncovered Water - Is There a Problem
- Tape #863 - Shabbos In The Good 'Ol Summertime
- Tape #907 - Bracha Acharono on Coffee and Ice Cream
- Tape #951 - The Body Works Exhibit
- Tape #994 - Bilam and His Donkey: A Problem with Tzar Ba'alei Chaim?

- Tape #1038 - Flowers At The Cemetary?
- Tape #1082 - Should You Buy An Expensive Esrog Box?
- Tape #1125 - Saying Kaddish For More Than One Person; Lo'aig Le'rash for Women?

CDs or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail [tapes@yadyechiel.org](mailto:tapes@yadyechiel.org) or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

---

RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.