



CONGREGATION TIFERETH BETH DAVID JERUSALEM

# Shabbat Bulletin

י תמוז התשפ"ב

שבת פרשת חקת

Shabbat Parshat Chukat

July 8 - 9, 2022 / 5782

Please print this bulletin before Shabbat.

Rabbi  
Yechezkel Freundlich

Chazan Sheini  
Rev. Amiel Bender

President  
Josh Orzech

Executive Director  
Stephanie Nagus

6519 Baily Road, Côte Saint-Luc, Québec H4V 1A1 Canada • 514-489-3841 • www.TBDJ.org • stephanie@tbdj.org

## SHABBAT SHALOM • שבת שלום

### Shabbat Parshat Chukat

Haftara: Shoftim 11:1 - 11:33

#### Friday, July 8

6:50pm Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat -  
Main Sanctuary  
7:00pm Minha et Kabbalat Chabbat -  
Minyane Sépharade - Chapel  
7:08pm Plag Hamincha  
8:26pm Candle Lighting  
8:45pm Sh'kiah

#### Shabbat, July 9 / 10 Tamuz

8:00am Shacharit - Hashkama Minyan  
9:00am Shacharit - Main Sanctuary  
9:00am Shaharit - Minyane Sépharade -  
Chapel  
9:07am Sof Zman Kriyat Sh'ma  
10:00am Kef Club Shabbat Programs for  
Kids - Lower Level Classrooms  
7:07pm Plag Hamincha  
8:00pm Minha et Seoudah Shleesheet -  
Minyane Sépharade  
8:15pm Mincha, Seudah Shleesheet  
and Maariv - Main Sanctuary  
8:44pm Sh'kiah  
9:41pm Havdala

"Musical Havdala on Facebook" is  
currently on hiatus until after Tisha B'Av.

החלמה מהירה ורפואה שלמה:  
הרב יחזקאל יהושע בן ציפורה רייזל  
יהודית בת טובה

### THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

Kiddush in the Minyane Sépharade is sponsored by **Clairette & Joe Bensimon** and family in memory of Joe's beloved grandmother Solika Bensimon z"l (Solika bat Yamna - 16 Tamuz).

Seudah Shleesheet is co-sponsored by **Annie & Gerry Cartman** in memory of Gerry's beloved father Sol Cartman z"l (Shneur Zalman ben Mordechai HaLevi - 6 Tamuz).

Seudah Shleesheet is co-sponsored by **Mendy Dalfen** and by **Roslyn & David Guttman** in memory of Mendy and Roslyn's beloved father Abraham David Dalfen z"l (Avraham David ben Aharon v'Sosi Leah - 10 Tamuz).

### TBDJ WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS!

**Laura & David Ardman**  
and their children **Tyler** (14), **Chloe** (10), **Anat** (7) and **Eden** (5)

**Valerie & Jay Lawrence**

**Lauren & Robert Stein**  
and their children **David** (12), **Callie** (10) and **Henry** (9)

**Heidi & Jason Toledano**  
and their children **Brooklyn** (13) and **Jax** (11)

### A SHABBAT MESSAGE FROM REVEREND AMIEL BENDER

#### No Mourning for Miriam?

Parashat Chukat teaches us about an especially difficult period in Moshe Rabeinu's life. He loses his sister Miriam on the Hebrew calendar date of the tenth of Nisan. Immediately, in the next verse, we read that upon her passing on the same day, Bnei Yisrael's well of water, available in the desert to Bnei Yisrael through Miriam's merit, dries up and the people gather against Moshe and Aharon to complain about the lack of water. Hashem tells Moshe to take his staff and to speak to the rock to provide water for the people and their flocks. Our sages teach us that this was a special rock created by Hashem as a source of miraculous waters. This was the rock that provided water for Ishmael, the son of Hagar and Avraham Avinu, when he was dying from thirst, and it was the same rock from which Moshe was commanded to draw water for the people forty years earlier following their exodus from Egypt.

To make a longer story short, since Moshe could not find that specific rock, he thought that he would have to strike a different one, following the precedent of striking the rock with his staff to draw water forty years earlier. Otherwise, why would Hashem have commanded him to take his staff with him? Rashi teaches that he struck a rock and only a small flow of water came forth and so he struck it again causing a torrent to come forth. Hashem severely punished Moshe and Aharon for this episode: *Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of Bnei Yisrael, therefore you will not bring this congregation to the land that I have given them* (Bamidbar 20:12). It is a devastating punishment for Moshe Rabeinu.

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### SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEK

#### Mincha/Maariv:

8:25pm Sunday to Thursday

#### Shacharit

Sunday: 8:00am

Monday and Thursday: 6:50am

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 7:00am

#### On Friday, July 15

Candle Lighting is at 8:22pm

Mincha is at 6:45pm

M. Sépharade Mincha is at 7:00pm

For our full schedule, go to [tbdj.org/calendar](http://tbdj.org/calendar).

**TZOM SHIVA ASAR B'TAMUZ IS ON**

**SUNDAY, JULY 17**

**fast begins at 3:35am / ends at 9:15pm**

## A SHABBAT MESSAGE FROM REVEREND AMIEL BENDER - CONTINUED

Commentary in Parshat Va'etchanan teaches that Moshe asked Hashem 515 times to rescind this punishment, but to no avail. We then read of the passing of his brother Aharon on the first day of Av. Imagine Moshe at the age of 119 - a leader who has just led his beloved flock through the desert for the past forty years, who has stood alone on occasion as an arbiter between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael, who has withstood the wrath of his people and the wrath of Hashem at times - losing his two siblings and his right of entry to his beloved land of Israel in the span of just under five months.

The deaths of Moshe's siblings must have been difficult. Moshe and Miriam had a special relationship. The Torah tells us that Moshe was placed by his mother in the Nile River to be saved from Pharaoh's decree of killing the Hebrews' newborn boys and that: *וַתֵּצֵא אֹתוֹ מִרְחוֹק... His sister stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done with him...* (Shemot 2:4) The Rabbis teach that Miriam's standing by the riverbank relates to prophesy. Miriam prophesied that her mother would give birth to a son who would deliver Israel. When Moshe was born and the house was filled with light, her father Amram rejoiced and praised Miriam because her prophecy had come to pass. However, when Moshe was cast into the river, Amram charged her with making a false prediction. Therefore, Miriam stood at a distance, by the riverbank, to know whether her prophecy would be fulfilled (Megillah 14a; *Mechilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Masekhta de-Shirah*, Beshalah 10).

Moshe was rescued from the Nile by Pharaoh's daughter and Miriam was on hand to ensure that Moshe would be nursed in a proper way. His sister said to Pharaoh's daughter: *Shall I go and summon for you a wet nurse from the Hebrew women, who will nurse the boy for you?* (Shemot 2:8) The Rabbis note Miriam's speed in calling her mother Yocheved to nurse Moshe, and her wisdom in concealing her identity as the infant's sister from the daughter of Pharaoh. (Sotah 12b) When Miriam was stricken with leprosy, we read how Moshe prayed for Miriam's health: *Please Hashem heal her now...* (Bamidbar 12:13) and the whole camp waited for seven days and did not journey until Miriam was healed and rejoined the camp.

Aharon was Moshe's right hand man in the leadership of Bnei Yisrael. After Aharon's death, Moshe was alone in his last days without his brother at his side to confer with professionally - and to be with on a family level.

Miriam, Aharon and Moshe. The triumvirate of prophets born to Amram and Yocheved. The three people whose merit protected and guided our forefathers through the long forty-year sojourn through the desert. The Talmud teaches us that three good leaders arose for our people: Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam, and that three special gifts were given to the Jewish people through them: The well of water in the desert in Miriam's merit, the cloud in Aharon's merit, and the manna in Moshe's merit. When Miriam died, the well stopped giving water. When Aharon died, the clouds of glory disappeared. But these two returned in Moshe's merit. But when Moshe died, all of them disappeared, as the verse states: *I cut off the three shepherds in one month...* (Zech. 11:8) Did they all die in one month? Miriam died in Nisan, Aharon in Av, and Moshe in Adar! Rather, this teaches you that the three good gifts which were given in their merit all disappeared in one month. (Tractate Ta'anit 9a) The Torah tells us of the passing of the three leaders of our people, and yet we only read of the mourning that took place after the passing of Aharon and Moshe:

***When the entire assembly saw that Aharon had perished, they wept for Aharon thirty days, the entire House of Israel...***  
(Bamidbar 20:29)

***The Children of Israel bewailed Moshe in the plains of Moav for thirty days...***  
(Devarim 34:8)

Our sages explain that everyone mourned Aharon because he was a lover of peace and harmony, a person who settled disputes between adversaries and couples. The *Yalkut* teaches that Moshe was not mourned in the same manner as his brother since his position of leadership involved responsibilities which included judgements and admonishments which caused some to feel less affection for him.

Interestingly (or surprisingly?) there is no mention of mourning for Miriam in the Torah. Rather - as mentioned above - the next verse takes us to Bnei Yisrael's latest water crisis. Was she not mourned? Moreso... When does Moshe mourn Miriam? Though I have not found answers to these questions in the commentaries, I have found some ideas which I will share.

I have discussed this with Rabbi Freundlich. The Rabbi reflected that Moshe Rabeinu's behavioral characteristics were on a different level, possibly influenced by the ultimate divine connection to Hashem that regular mortals - human beings like us - are not privileged to have. The Rabbi addressed different occasions in the Torah where this is evident. His not eating or drinking for forty days at a time while on Har Sinai. The radiance of his face at times derived explicitly from the "touch" of Hashem experienced when Moshe requests to see Hashem's presence.

Miriam, Moshe and Aaron are partners in an epic journey of wandering and discovery. Why the differences in mourning these three leaders? Did Moshe regret not properly mourning Miriam's death? Perhaps striking the rock was an expressive of frustration and sadness at the death of his sister rather than a lack of faith in God?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Zt"l wrote about Moshe's behaviour in hitting the rock as a sign of mourning: *Moshe lost control because his sister Miriam had just died. He was in mourning for his eldest sibling. It is hard to lose a parent, but in some ways, it is even harder to lose a brother or sister. They are your generation. You feel the Angel of Death come suddenly close. You face your own mortality. Miriam was more than a sister to Moshe... Moshe surely knew what he owed his elder sister. ...According to the plain sense of the text, he would not have grown up knowing who his true parents were and to which people he belonged. Though they had been separated during his years of exile in Midian, once he returned, Miriam had accompanied him throughout his mission. She had led the women in song at the Red Sea. ...So it was not simply the Israelites' demand for water that led Moses to lose control of his emotions, but rather his own deep grief. The Israelites may have lost their water, but Moses had lost his sister, who had watched over him as a child, guided his development, supported him throughout the years, and helped him carry the burden of leadership in her role as leader of the women.*

Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein suggests that maybe the people weren't on a proper level to mourn for Miriam. He writes that the Torah's mention of Miriam's death is juxtaposed with the mention of the *Red Heifer* - the *Parah Aduma* - where we learn that the passing of a righteous person brings about atonement. *If the lesson of this avenue of atonement is taught through the death of Miriam, we must assume that it was effective at that time.*

The Rabbi adds that: *The atonement that comes with the passing of a righteous person is contingent on those who remain mourning their loss, as this serves to define where they stand in terms of the departed person's values. If so, then we have to assume that the nation's reaction to Miriam's death was one of mourning. The problem is a look at the ensuing verses doesn't seem to give that impression at all. There are no words at all of any grief or mourning expressed. Rather, the people come straight to Moshe and basically say, "Now what are we meant to drink? Did you take us out so that we should just die in the desert"? As eulogies go, that leaves a good deal to be desired! Rabbi Bernstein concludes that: The people's appalling reaction to Miriam's death was thus a clear reflection of their own deficient spiritual standing. The total lack of any words of appreciation or condolences regarding Miriam convinced Moshe that they were not on a level for the higher miracle to be advisable - or even possible, therefore, he hit the rock.*

Another thought that I found in contemporary commentary is that the extensive thirty-day mourning period for Aaron may be an expression of regret by Moses for not publicly recognizing Miriam's death.

It is also possible that Miriam, even with her leadership and prophetic status, may not have been on the level of Moshe and Aharon where communal mourning was practiced.

Did Moshe mourn Miriam? Did the people mourn Miriam? Of course, they did. We do not only learn from what the Torah tells us, but from what the Torah does not tell us. The Torah does not need to tell us that our ancestors in the desert were people like us with feelings, emotions and appropriate or inappropriate actions. From the beginning of time, beloved family, friends, leaders and more have been mourned when they pass and leave us.

As commentary teaches, the episode of the water and Moshe's striking the rock happened on the same day of Miriam's death. This sadly suggests that Moshe had to devote himself to the crisis at hand and did not have the proper time to mourn his beloved sister's passing - a necessary therapeutic process following the loss of a loved one. We can identify with this as contemporary history has plagued us with suddenness of the Holocaust and with Covid-19 departures where proper mourning could not be exercised.

Miriam's merit produced water for our ancestors in the desert. The Torah is called *אֵין מַיִם חַיִּים* - a source of running water. As we read Parashat Chukat this Shabbat we will remember a woman whose merit sustained the generation of the desert so they could pass on the legacy of Torah, the very legacy which we are fortunate to have today.

Shabbat Shalom,

*Rev. Amiel*