

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Graciously shared with PhiloTorah

CHUKAT

For a second time we find Moshe Rabbeinu striking a desert boulder with his staff. The incident and its consequences as related in this week's Parsha leaves us with a gnawing question. What did G-d want Moshe to say when speaking to the rock?

Moshe, this time, was simply being told to lift his hands in prayerful supplication and talk from the depths of his heart; a process he knew so well. Pray for water. Start, the way he always would do, with praise (Shevach)... and then ask for water (Bakasha). Perhaps, also invoke the merit of the forefathers. Ask for water in the merit of His children who crossed the Yam Suf following you, Moshe, so faithfully, believing that G-d is protecting them. What a perfect moment it would have been, hearing Moshe recite the first version of T'filat Geshem.

Rabbi Chaim Wasserman zt"l felt that this would have been a precious moment for Moshe to, yet again, publicly reinforce the efficacy of prayer for this generation and all generations to follow. Moshe was the one who had prayed so fervently on

behalf of the Israelites when G-d wanted to destroy them all for having made the golden calf. Moshe had begged for the well-being of his sister Miriam when she besmirched your good name and G-d smote her with a debilitating leprosy. With five simple words Moshe beseeched G-d to heal Miriam. And Moshe will soon stand and endlessly pray in every which way for a chance to enter the Promised Land.

Perhaps, now it was the time for Moshe to pray. In this way G-d's name would have been sanctified in the eyes of this entire generation more than in any other way. Tragically, such an opportunity was missed. Instead, Moshe struck the rock as he had done once before. The Israelites needed a lesson in prayer, and instead, they saw a slight of hand. It is trying days that we, the Jewish people, face today in the Land of Israel. We should look at the hidden message from the Parsha of how crucial and important Prayer could be to help extricate us from the difficult situation we find ourselves in. ✕