

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Chukas

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Parshas Chukas 5771

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Unraveling the Mystery of "Mei-Meriva" Based on the Tikunei Zohar

It Was Heavenly Ordained that Moshe Should Strike the Rock Twice Insuring the Survival of Torah Due to Disagreements among the Sages

In this week's parsha, parshas Chukas, we read seven pesukim that describe the complex and profound subject of the sin of "mei-merivah" — the waters of conflict. As a result of their involvement in this matter, it was decreed that Moshe and Aharon would not enter Eretz Yisroel. Here is the passage precisely as it appears in the Torah (Bamidbor 20, 7-13):

“וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, קח את המטה והקהל את העדה אתה ואהרן אחיך, ודברתם אל הסלע לעיניהם ונתן מימיו, והוצאת להם מים מן הסלע, והשקית את העדה ואת בעירם, ויקח משה את המטה מלפני ה' כאשר צוהו, ויקהלו משה ואהרן את הקהל אל פני הסלע, ויאמר להם שמעו נא המורים, המן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים.

וירם משה את ידו ויך את הסלע במטוה פעמיים, ויצאו מים רבים ותשת העדה ובעירם, 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, המה מי מריבה אשר רבו בני ישראל את ה' ויקדש בם.”

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, “Take the staff and gather together the assembly, you and Aharon your brother, and you shall speak to the rock before their eyes and it shall give its waters. You shall bring forth for them water from the rock and give drink to the assembly and their animals.” Moshe took the staff from before Hashem, as He had commanded him. Moshe and Aharon gathered the congregation before the rock and he said to them, “Listen now, rebels, shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?”

Then Moshe raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff twice; abundant water came forth and the assembly and their animals drank. Hashem said to Moshe and Aharon, “Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Bnei Yisroel, therefore, you will not bring this congregation to the land that I have given them.” They are the waters of conflict, where the Bnei Yisroel contended with Hashem, and He was sanctified through them.

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Why Did HKB"H Command Moshe: "Take the Staff"?

The early commentators struggled to explain and identify the actual sin of "mei-merivah." Scriptures only reveal that HKB"H said to Moshe and Aharon: **יֵעַן לֹא הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** -- **Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Bnei Yisroel.** The precise nature of their transgression is not revealed. According to Rashi, however, their failure was in hitting the rock rather than speaking to it; for, HKB"H had commanded them: **וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֵּלֶעַ** -- **and you shall speak to the rock.**

As the Scriptures describe, Moshe Rabeinu struck the rock twice and, thus, failed to sanctify Hashem. In the words of Rashi: **יֵעַן לֹא הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישׁנִי, שֶׁאִילוּ דַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֵּלֶעַ וְהוֹצִיא, הִיִּיתִי מְקוּדָשׁ לְעֵינֵי הָעֵדָה וְאוֹמְרִים, מַה סֵּלֶעַ זֶה שְׂאִינוּ מְדַבֵּר וְאִינוּ שׁוֹמְעִים וְאִינוּ הַסֵּלֶעַ יֹדֵעַ וְהוֹצִיא, הִיִּיתִי מְקוּדָשׁ לְעֵינֵי הָעֵדָה וְאוֹמְרִים, מַה סֵּלֶעַ זֶה שְׂאִינוּ מְדַבֵּר וְאִינוּ שׁוֹמְעִים וְאִינוּ יֹדְעִים** — **had you spoken to the rock and it had produced, I would have been sanctified before the assembly, and they would have said: Now, if this rock which neither speaks nor hears nor requires sustenance obeys the word of the Omnipresent, how much more so should we obey His word!**

At this point, we are already confronted by several perplexing issues: a) HKB"H, Himself, already testified to Moshe's trustworthiness (Bamidbar 12, 7): **בְּכָל בֵּיתִי נֶאֱמָן הוּא** — **in My entire house, he is the most trusted.** If so, how can we even imagine that he did not fulfill HKB"H's command precisely? b) If, indeed, HKB"H did not intend for Moshe to strike the rock, but to only speak to it, then why did He instruct Moshe to take the staff in the first place: **קַח אֶת הַמַּטֵּה וְהַקְהֵל אֶת הָעֵדָה**? What purpose did the staff serve? c) In parshas Voeschanan, it is written (Devarim 3, 25): **אֶעֱבְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה** — **Moshe pleaded with Hashem, "Please let me cross and see the good land that is on the other side of the Yarden, this good mountain and the Livanon."** But Hashem became angry with me because of you, and He did not listen to me. How are we to understand Moshe's claim: **But Hashem became angry with me because of you?** According to the earlier text, the decree that Moshe would not cross the Yarden was due to his transgression concerning the "mei-merivah" — the waters of conflict.

Striking the Rock Was Considered an Involuntary Act

Before unraveling the mystery of the subject of "mei-merivah," let us review Rashi's chronology of the events leading up to the water flowing out of the rock. Clearly, his

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commentary aims to clarify several of the difficulties presented by the subject of the sin of "mei-merivah": a) What led Moshe to strike the rock twice rather than speaking to it? b) What wrong were Yisroel guilty of that caused Moshe to lash out at them with the words: "שמעו נא המורים" — **Listen now, rebels?** c) Why did Moshe ask Yisroel in amazement: "המנן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים" — **do you expect us to bring forth water for you from this rock?** After all, isn't that what HKB"H commanded him to do: "והוצאת להם מים מן הסלע" — **You shall bring forth water for them from the rock?**

Therefore, Rashi proposes the following sequence of events. First, HKB"H says to Moshe: "ודברתם אל הסלע" — **and you shall speak to the rock** — speak rather than strike. The reason he specifically states "הסלע" — the rock — is because He wanted Moshe to speak to a particular rock. HKB"H wanted Moshe to address the very same rock that was once Miriam's well--and since Miriam passed away had resumed the status of a mere rock. Hence, "הסלע" — the rock--a rock that he was already familiar with. "ויוקהילו משה ואהרן" — **Moshe and Aharon were requested to assemble the people before the rock that was Miriam's well and to speak to it.**

Once, however, the rock ceased to be Miriam's well, it situated itself amongst the other rocks, making it difficult for them to recognize it. When Yisroel realized that they were searching for the particular rock that was once Miriam's well, they suggested that Moshe and Aharon simply bring forth water for the people from any rock of their choosing — why waste time searching for that particular rock? To this suggestion Moshe responded: "שמעו נא המורים" — **Listen now, rebels** — fools, instructing your teachers and leaders what to do; "המנן הסלע הזה נוציא לכם מים" — **are you seriously suggesting that we attempt to bring forth water from a rock that was not designated for that purpose?**

In the meantime, Moshe and Aharon found a particular rock, which they mistakenly identified as Miriam's well. They addressed it as they were commanded to do — to produce water for Yisroel — but nothing happened, because it was not, in fact, Miriam's well, the rock designated to produce water for Yisroel. This, however, led Moshe and Aharon to believe that they were actually meant to strike the rock — just as Moshe was commanded to do in Rephidim (Shemot 17, 6): "והכית בצור" — **you shall strike the rock**. For this reason: "וירם משה את ידו" — **he raised his hand to strike the rock.**

Then, at that precise moment, a miraculous thing occurred — the rock that was, in fact, Miriam's well appeared before them; "ויוך את הסלע במטהו" — **Moshe proceeded to strike it with his staff, but it only produced a few meager drops of water; for, they had not**

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acted in accordance with HKB"H's command to simply speak to the rock. Upon seeing that the rock failed to produce the desired amount of water, Moshe struck the rock a second time: **"וּיֵצְאוּ מִים רַבִּים וְתִשָּׂה הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם"** — **abundant water came forth and the assembly and their animals drank**. This summarizes Rashi's interpretation of the events of "mei-merivah."

Reviewing Rashi's account of this episode, it would seem that Moshe and Aharon were truly blameless. At first, they did, in fact, speak to the rock — mistakenly thinking that it was Miriam's well. When it failed to produce any water, they drew the conclusion that they were meant to strike the rock. As Moshe raised his hand to strike the rock, the rock that actually was Miriam's well appeared, almost miraculously, and received the blow. In response to this blow, it produced only a few drops of water, since Moshe was supposed to have spoken to it rather than strike it. Moshe proceeded to strike it a second time, at which point it gave forth its water in abundance. It would seem that Moshe and Aharon were innocent victims according to this interpretation; so, why were they punished?

Sensing this difficulty, Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrochi, author of one of the premiere commentaries on Rashi, attempts to explain Moshe and Aharon's punishment based on the following Mishnah (Ovos 4, 5): **"הַמְחַלֵּל שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם בְּסֵתֵר נִפְרָעִים מִמֶּנּוּ בְּגִלּוּי, אֶחָד שׁוֹגֵג וְאֶחָד — מְזִיד בְּחִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם"** — **One who desecrates the Name of Heaven secretly will be punished publicly; whether the act was performed inadvertently or intentionally, it makes no difference concerning the desecration of the Name**. This solution, however, does not truly satisfy our sense of justice — why would Hashem, seemingly, devise so many ways in which to trip them up, causing them to strike the rock?

Striking the Rock Led to Disagreements Concerning Torah Matters

Let us begin to unravel this puzzle based on the words of the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 21, 44.) which illuminate this mystery in a very clear manner. He explains that aside from the simple, straightforward understanding of HKB"H's directive to Moshe: **"וְדַבַּרְתָּם אֶל הַסֵּלֶע"** — **and you shall speak to the rock before their eyes and it shall give its waters** — there was also a spiritual intent inherent in this command. The entire scenario was intended as a symbolic gesture to provide the people with an abundant source of Torah — which is compared to water. As the Gemoreh states (Bava Kamma 17.): **"וְאֵיךְ"** — **מים אלא תורה שנאמר הוי כל צמא לכו למים** — water inevitably refers to Torah; this is derived from the possuk in Yeshayah (55, 1). The Tikunei Zohar states that the rock

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represents the Oral Law, Torah she'b'al peh, and that the entire and unfortunate sequence of events was triggered by the assembly's rebellious and contentious nature — wishing to force Moshe and Aharon's hand.

Had Moshe spoken to the rock, he would have released a wealth of Torah knowledge with unusual clarity, free of doubts and disputes — akin to the situation in the World to Come. The prophet describes the World to Come as follows (Yirmiyah 31, 33): "ולא ילמדו עוד איש את רעהו ואיש את אחיו לאמר דעו את ה', כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד גדולם נאום" — from the lowliest to the greatest, all will possess an inherent knowledge and awareness of Hashem. As a consequence of Moshe striking the rock, however, only a scarce amount of Torah knowledge emerged; furthermore, this led to numerous doubts and disputes amongst Torah scholars concerning haloche.

The divine kabbalist, the author of the Megaleh Amukos on parshas Voeschanan (74), applies this concept to explain the possuk in our parsha. Immediately after the incident of "mei-merivah," it states (Bamidbor 20, 13): "המה מי מריבה אשר רבו בני ישראל" — **They are the waters of conflict, where Bnei Yisroel became contentious.** The possuk indicates that as a consequence of Moshe striking the rock, doubts and controversy multiplied amongst Torah scholars.

The Megaleh Amukos goes on to reveal a wonderful allusion in the following possuk (Yirmiyah 23, 29): "הלא כה דברי כאש נאום ה', וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע" — the word of Hashem is compared to fire and to a hammer that shatters a rock into many pieces. In other words, HKB"H is saying that His Torah was meant to be transmitted with extreme clarity — without doubts and disputes — yet, "כפטיש יפוצץ סלע" — **like a hammer it will shatter rock** — because Moshe struck the rock with his staff, like a hammer, disputes arise and spread among Yisroel. The allusion to this incredible revelation is that the numerical value of the word פטי"ש, hammer, equals מט"ה מש"ה, Moshe's staff. Due to the disputes among Torah scholars, Torah is transmitted bit by bit, drop by drop, often with uncertainty.

How incredibly this coincides with the words of the Lev Aryeh (Chukas 14) who addresses the statement of our blessed sages in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni): "ודברתם אל הסלע" — **שנה עליו פרק אחר והוא מוציא מים מן הסלע** — speak to the rock; while standing over the rock, teach a chapter and He will release the water from the rock. Which chapter did HKB"H want Moshe to teach at the rock? This question can be answered based on what the

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Beit Yosef (O.C. 50) writes in the name of the Reeh (Berachot 32.) regarding the reason the chapter of "איזהו מקומן של זבחים" is recited before Pesukei D'Zimrah: "לפי שאין – בכל אותו פרק מחלוקת והיא משנה ברורה למשה בסיני" – because there are no disputes throughout this entire chapter; it represents a pure, unadulterated teaching to Moshe at Sinai.

We have already learned from the Tikunei Zohar that had Moshe not struck the rock, they would have been privileged to receive the waters of Torah in abundance – with extreme clarity and without controversy. Thus, we can interpret HKB"H's words to Moshe: "ודברתם" – "speak to the rock". As the Midrash explains: "שנה עליו פרק אחד" – while standing by the rock, teach the chapter of "איזהו מקומן של זבחים", which does not contain any disagreements among the Tanaim; "והוא מוציא מים מן הסלע" – and HKB"H will grant you the waters of Torah in abundance, free of disputes and controversy; however, when this chapter was not reviewed, but, instead, the rock was struck, the waters that emerged came out drop by drop, in fragments, causing uncertainty and controversy.

"Where Bnei Yisroel Contended with Hashem"

Additionally, the Lev Aryeh associates the possuk: "המה מי מריבה אשר רבו בני ישראל את ה'" – **They are the waters of conflict where Bnei Yisroel contended with Hashem** – with a famous dispute found in the Gemoreh (Bava Metzia 59:) between Rabbi Eliezer and the Chachamim concerning a particular type of oven – "tanuro shel achnaii."

In the midst of the dispute, Rabbi Eliezer declares:

"אם הלכה כמותי מן השמים יוכיחו, יצאתה בת קול ואמרה, מה לכם אצל רבי אליעזר שהלכה כמותו בכל מקום, עמד רבי יהושע על רגליו ואמר... אין אנו משגיחין בבת קול, שכבר כתבת בהר סיני בתורה (שמות כג ב) אחרי רבים להטות."

If the halocheh agrees with me, let Heaven prove it; whereupon a heavenly voice proclaimed: what argument do you have with Rabbi Eliezer, whom the halocheh follows in all places. Rabbi Yehoshua stood up on his feet and replied . . . we do not heed a heavenly voice; for, You already wrote in the Torah at Har Sinai (Shemot 23, 2): "matters shall be decided according to the majority opinion."

This, then, is the meaning of the possuk: "--המה מי מריבה אשר רבו בני ישראל את ה'" – **They are the waters of conflict where Bnei Yisroel contended with Hashem.** As a result of Moshe striking the rock, disputes became rampant among Torah scholars.

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Consequently: "רבו בני ישראל את ה'" — Yisroel even contend with Hashem as reflected by Rabbi Yehoshua's opposition to the heavenly voice: "איך אנו משגיחין בבת קול".

The commentators add that the conclusion of the passage of "mei-merivah": "ויקדש בם" — **and He was sanctified through them** — corresponds with the conclusion of the narrative in the Gemoreh (ibid.). For, after Rabbi Yehoshua disregarded the declaration of the heavenly voice, Rabbi Natan meets Eliyahu and asks: How did HKB"H react at that moment? Eliyahu answered that He smiled and said: "נצחוני בניי, נצחוני בניי" — **My children have defeated Me; My children have defeated Me**. So, as the passage of "mei-merivah" testifies, even though Rabbi Yehoshua and the sages, seemingly, argued with Hashem, nevertheless: "ויקדש בם" — HKB"H was sanctified by their actions; for, it is His will that the Torah scholars determine the halocheh.

Moshe and Aharon Acted as the People's Agents

Continuing along this exalted path, unraveling the complexities of the episode of "mei-merivah" as illuminated by the Tikunei Zohar, let us incorporate an idea from the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh (Bamidbar 20, 8). Had Moshe and Aharon spoken to the rock, they would have hastened the realization of the final and complete redemption, they would have entered Eretz Yisroel and Moshe Rabeinu would have built the Beis HaMikdosh to stand forevermore. In fact, the Gemoreh (Kesubos 5.) teaches us that our enemies would have had no power over Moshe's handiwork. In the holy words of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh:

"ועומק הדברים הוא, שאם היו משה ואהרן עושים קידוש ה' הגדול, באמצעות שהיתה העדה גם כן כולה שלימה וצדיקים, היו מחליטים אמונת ה' בלבם שלימה, והיה נגרש מהם חלק הרע, והיה כח בהם להעמיד אמונתם לדורי דורות, ומעתה היו משה ואהרן נכנסים לארץ, והיה משה בונה בית המקדש, ואין חשש להשלכת חמתו על ישראל כשיהיו חוטאים."

In order for Moshe and Aharon to have performed this tremendous act of "kiddush Hashem," the entire assembly would have also had to have been on the same spiritual level — completely righteous, united, possessing total "emuneh" in Hashem, free of evil and able to transmit their strength of belief to all future generations.

Unfortunately, since they did not speak to the rock, but, rather, Moshe struck the rock, this ultimate realization did not occur. Moshe was unable to enter the land and to build the Beis HaMikdosh. This is the gist of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh's words.

We see, in fact, Moshe Rabeinu himself was on a level of completeness and perfection consistent with HKB"H's testimonial: "בכל ביתי נאמן הוא" — **in my entire house, he is the most trustworthy**. Aharon HaKohen was similarly on the same spiritual level as Moshe.

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Rashi expresses this fact in Shemot (6, 26): **”יש מקומות שמקדים אהרן למשה ויש מקומות – sometimes Scriptures mention Aharon before Moshe, while in other places Moshe is mentioned first; this is an indication that they are equivalent to one another. So, as far as Moshe and Aharon were concerned, they were surely worthy of bringing forth water from the rock in the ideal manner.**

Nevertheless, we have learned a well-known principle in the Mishnah (Berachot 34:): **”המתפלל וטעה סימן רע לו, ואם שליח ציבור הוא סימן רע לשולחיו, מפני ששלוחו של אדם – One who prayed and erred, it is a bad sign for him. If he is the one leading the prayer service, then it is a bad omen for the congregation that sent him, since a person’s agent is like himself. We see that the success of a public agent depends on the worthiness of the people themselves. Hence, the success of Moshe and Aharon, who were duly appointed by HKB”H to represent the people of Yisroel, was totally dependent on Yisroel, the people they represented.**

”Take the Staff” In Case They Are Not Worthy of Redemption

It is now easier to understand why HKB”H instructed Moshe: **”קח את המטה והקהל את העדה ואתה ואהרן אחיך, ודברתם אל הסלע לעיניהם ונתן מימיו, והוצאת להם מים מן הסלע, --Take the staff and gather together the assembly, you and Aharon your brother, and you shall speak to the rock before their eyes and it shall give its waters. You shall bring forth for them water from the rock and give drink to the assembly and their animals. Recall that we posed the question that if Moshe was not supposed to use the staff then why did HKB”H command him to take it.**

Based on what we have learned, it is apparent that HKB”H hinted to them from the very start that the situation would depend on Bnei Yisroel’s choice. If Yisroel--the assembly on whose behalf Moshe and Aharon were acting – were worthy of the final redemption then their agents would successfully fulfill their mission by speaking to the rock. In that event, the water would flow from the rock – alluding to the waters of Torah that would come forth in abundance with tremendous clarity and without any need for controversy.

On the other hand, if Yisroel were yet unworthy, their agents, Moshe and Aharon, would fail in their mission on Yisroel’s account. They would be forced to resort to the staff and to strike the rock; at least, some of the vast waters of Torah would trickle out to quench the thirst of the holy flock; notwithstanding, disputes and controversy would ensue among the Torah scholars due to the inevitable lack of clarity.

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Alas, we have gained a deeper appreciation of why Moshe and Aharon failed to complete their task — due to no fault of their own. Originally, the rock, Miriam's well, hid itself, causing them to address the wrong rock; that rock refused to give forth its waters, since it was not commanded to do so. In the end, when they decided to obtain the water by striking the rock, the rock that was actually Miriam's well presented itself. When the blow from the staff landed, it did not want to release but a meager amount of water; after all, Moshe and Aharon had been commanded to speak to it, not to strike it. Consequently, Moshe was forced to strike the rock a second time in order to release its waters.

In the final analysis, it was heavenly-ordained that Moshe and Aharon would not succeed in their mission, since Yisroel were not yet worthy for the ultimate redemption. It is now much easier to comprehend Moshe's response upon realizing that he did not succeed in fulfilling his mission dutifully. He understood that the moment for the final and complete redemption had not yet arrived. Thus, he exclaimed painfully: **שִׁמְעוּ נָא הַמּוֹרִים הַמֵּן הַסֵּלַע** — **as you can see for yourselves, since you have been rebellious and contentious and are not worthy of redemption, I am unable to produce water from the rock by merely speaking to it but am forced to strike it.**

Now, we can explain the continuation of the "mei-merivah" narrative as follows: **וַיִּרֶם מֹשֶׁה** — **Then Moshe raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff.** Moshe cleverly devised a plan to benefit Yisroel. By striking the rock twice — as if he was releasing his wrath on the rock — he intended to perform a symbolic gesture. He hoped that just as he seemingly took out his wrath on the rock, HKB"H would similarly take out his wrath on the stones and structures of the two Batei Mikdash rather than on the people of Yisroel. This explains why Moshe said to Yisroel: **וַיִּתְעַבֵּר ה' בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי** — **but Hashem became angry with me because of you, and He did not listen to me;** for, Moshe's failure was due to Yisroel's unworthiness for the final redemption.

Disputes in Torah Matters Guarantee the Torah's Survival

Come and see how this entire scenario was arranged by HKB"H for Yisroel's benefit. Disputes among Torah scholars guarantee the perpetuation of Torah during periods of exile. For, it is impossible to clarify the truth and depth of haloches without debates between Torah scholars. We have learned in the Gemoreh (Taanis 7.):

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמַא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא, מַאי דְכַתִּיב (מְשָׁלִי כֹז יוֹ) בְּרֹזַל בְּבְרֹזַל יַחַד, לֹוֹמֵר לֶךְ, מַה בְּרֹזַל זֶה אַחַד מִחֲדָר אֶת חֲבִירוֹ, אִף שְׁנֵי תַלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים מִחֲדָרִין זֶה אֶת זֶה בְּהַלְכָה... וְהֵינְנוּ דְאָמַר רַבִּי

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Chukas

יוסי ברבי חנינא, מאי דכתיב חרב אל הבדים ונואלו, חרב על שונאיהן של תלמידי חכמים – שעוסקין בד בבד בתורה. just as one iron blade is used to sharpen another, so too, two Torah scholars sharpen each other's minds by means of their halachic debates.

When one engages in Torah study alone, one can easily draw erroneous conclusions or convince oneself that incorrect interpretations are in fact valid. The Mishnah states (Ovos 4, 13): "ואל בינתך אל תשען" – **and do not rely on your own intuition**. A person tends to favor his own ideas and theories and often finds it difficult to remain objective concerning the products of his own mind. On the other hand, engaging in Torah study with close friends, debating issues with one another, pointing out difficulties and resolving them together, examining the pros and cons of each argument together – this process is the only way to truly understand Torah and halocheh.

As long as Moshe Rabeinu was alive, there was no uncertainty regarding Torah matters. All Torah-related questions and problems were presented to Moshe Rabeinu, who received the Torah from Sinai, and he provided the solutions. Upon realizing that the time for the redemption had not yet arrived, and that he would not be allowed to enter the land with the people, Moshe foresaw that Yisroel would encounter doubts and uncertainty in Torah matters. Confirming Moshe's concerns, the Gemoreh states (Temurah 16.): "אמר רב יהודה: אמר שמואל שלשת אלפים הלכות נשתכחו בימי אבלו של משה... אמר רבי אבהו, אף על פי כן החזירן עתניאל בן קנז מתוך פלפולו" – three thousand halochehs were forgotten during the mourning period for Moshe; nevertheless, they were restored due to the Talmudic analysis and scholarship of Osniel ben Kenaz.