



# CLASSIC DAF KESHER

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## PARSHAT CHUKAT פרשת חקת

### DVAR TORAH PEACE

We are told that when Aharon passed away, "The whole house of Israel cried over his loss" (Bamidbar 20:29). Our Sages say that because Aharon brought love between enemies, and brought peace between husbands and wives; everyone – all men and all women – mourned him (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer Chapter 17). Hillel says (Avot 1:12), "Become students of Aharon, love peace and pursue peace." The Mishnah teaches that we must not only try to **act** as Aharon did, pursuing peace, but must also have the **attitude** that he had, loving peace.

In an anecdote in the Talmud (Taanit 22a) two people appear that took Aharon's approach. We are told that Rav Beroka Chozá'ah had a mystical encounter with Eliahu Hanavi in the marketplace of Bei Lefet; and Rav Beroka asked Eliahu, "Who in this marketplace is a ben Olam Haba –literally, a 'son' of the World to Come?" After waiting for a while, Eliahu pointed out two people. Rav Beroka ran after them and asked them what they do. They responded, "We are **בדחנים** – people that make others laugh. When people are sad we cheer them up; and when people are quarrelling we bring peace between them."

What did Rav Beroka mean by "who is a ben Olam Haba?" Do not all of Israel have a share in the world to come (except for some very extreme exceptions)? It seems that the word "ben" in the expression "ben Olam Haba" is used as it is in the expression "ben Torah." Someone who is associated with Torah is a "ben Torah," just as someone obligated in mitzvot is a "bar mitzvah." Similarly, someone who is a ben Olam Haba is someone who is an Olam Haba type person – someone who lives with an Olam Haba consciousness.

Someone focused just on this world can always find something wrong, something to bring them down. This is an imperfect world and even standard day-to-day life can be depressing. This world is also a world of fragmentation and dissent and the potential for quarreling and bickering is endless.

In the World to Come – **אז ימלא שחוק פינו** – **then** we will be able to have unbridled joy. In the World to Come there will be unity and peace and no nation will lift up sword against nation. Eliahu taught Rabbi Beroka that we **can** bring joy and peace to others and one's self in this world, but only if we are **bnei Olam Haba** – if our consciousness and mindset is that of the ideal world of the future.

This explains why peace is something that needs to be **pursued**. Peace is a far-away, distant vision of the World to Come – but it must be the lighthouse we navigate towards. It is the value that motivates every action of a student of Aharon.

## SOURCE GUIDE: MIRIAM-EFRAT-ACHACHEL

A number of additional names are attributed by Chazal to Miriam, whose passing appears in this week's Parshah. She is identified as Puah (Shemot 1:15), Efrat (I Divrei Hayamim 2:19), and Acharchel (I Divrei Hayamim 4:8). This source guide explores a theme associated with the names Efrat and Acharchel.

### A. Efrat and Acharchel

The Book of Divrei Hayamim traces the ancestry of King David, and lists many names. Many of these names already appear elsewhere in Tanach; and quite a few appear nowhere else. The Midrash quotes the following tradition, that is, perhaps, the basis of the sources that will follow:

<p><b>1. Ruth Rabbah 2:1</b> Rabbi Simon quoted Rabbi Yehoshua son of Levi, and Rabbi Chama the father of Rabbi Hoshea quoted Rebbi: The book of Divrei Hayamim was only given over to be expounded.</p>	<p><b>רות רבה ב:א</b> רבי סימון בשם ריב"ל, ור' חמא אבוי דרבי הושע בשם רבי: לא נתן דברי הימים אלא להדרש.</p>
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Two names appear in Divrei Hayamim in a list of families in the tribe of Yehudah; they do not appear anywhere else in Tanach:

<p><b>2. I Divrei Hayamim 2:19</b> Azuvah died, and Kalev took <b>Efrat</b> as a wife and she gave birth to Chur. <b>I Divrei Hayamim 4:8</b> Kotz gave birth to Anuv and the Tzovevah and the families of <b>Acharchel</b> son of Harum.</p>	<p><b>דברי הימים א' ב:יט</b> וַתָּמָת עֲזוּבָה וַיִּקַּח לוֹ כְּלֵב אֶת אֶפְרַת וַתֵּלֶד לוֹ אֶת חוּר. <b>דברי הימים א' ד:ח</b> וַיִּקְוֶץ הוֹלִיד אֶת עֲנוּב וְאֶת הַצִּבְבָּה וּמִשְׁפַּחַת אַחֲרָחֵל בֶּן הָרֹם.</p>
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The Midrash identifies both Efrat and Acharchel as Miriam:

<p><b>3. Shemot Rabbah 1:17</b> "Kalev took <b>Efrat</b> as a wife" – <b>This is Miriam</b>. Why was she called Efrat? Because Israel was fruitful and multiplied through her efforts (Miriam is also identified with Puah [Shemot 1:15], one of the Israelite midwives who ignored Pharaoh's command to kill newborn baby boys; and, instead, helped them thrive) ... <b>Acharchel is Miriam</b>. Why is she called that? It is based on the verse, "All of the women went after her ..." (Shemot 15:20).</p>	<p><b>שמות רבה א:יז</b> "ויקח לו כלב את אפרת" – זו מרים. למה נקרא שמה אפרת? שפרו ורבו ישראל על ידיה ... אחרחל זו מרים. ולמה נקרא שמה כן? ע"ש "ותצאן כל הנשים אחריה ..." (שמות טו:כ).</p>
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### B. Miriam and Malchut

Both of these names are woven into a Midrash that sees Miriam as the source of malchut, royalty:

<p><b>6. Shemot Rabbah 1:17</b> How do we know that David was descended from Miriam? For it is written, "David was an Efrati man from Beit Lechem in Yehudah ..." (I Shmuel 17:12) ... "and the families of Acharchel son of Harum" (I Divrei Hayamim 4:8). "Acharchel" – is Miriam. Why was she called that? It is based on the verse, "All of the women went after her (achareha) ..." (Shemot 15:20). What does "families" teach us? That he merited to raise families through his marriage with her. "Son of Harum" – She merited that David came from her, the one whose kingdom the Holy One, blessed be He, raised up, as it says, "He will give power to His king, and raise up the "horn" of His anointed one" (I Shmuel 2:10).</p>	<p><b>שמות רבה א:יז</b> ומנין שדוד בא ממרים? דכתיב, "ודוד בן איש אפרתי הזה מבית לחם יהודה ..." (שמואל א' יז:יב) ... "ומשפחת אחרחל בן הרום" (דברי הימים א' ד:ח): "אחרחל" – זו מרים. ולמה נקרא שמה כן? ע"ש "ותצאן כל הנשים אחריה ..." (שמות טו:כ). מהו "משפחות"? זכה להעמיד ממנה משפחות. "בן הרום" – זכתה שיצא ממנה דוד שרימם הקב"ה מלכותו, כד"א "ויתן עוז למלכו וירם קרן משיחו" (שמואל א' ב:י).</p>
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Rashi (based on Sotah 11b) says that Miriam, in her identity as Puah, was blessed with royalty:

<p><b>7. Rashi on Shemot 1:21</b> "Hashem made houses [for the midwives]" – This refers to houses of Kehunah (priesthood), Leviah, and royalty. "He built the House of Hashem and the House of the king" (I Kings 9:1). Kehunah and Leviah come from Yocheved (who gave birth to</p>	<p><b>רש"י על שמות א:כא</b> "ויעש להם בתים" – בתי כהונה ולויה ומלכות שקרויין בתים. "ויבן את בית ה' ואת בית המלך" (מלכים א' ט:א). כהונה ולויה מיוכבד, ומלכות ממרים כדאיתא</p>
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<p>Moshe and Aharon), and royalty from Miriam, as appears in Tractate Sotah.</p> <p><b>Sotah 11b</b>  ... Houses of royalty – David also came from Miriam, as it is written, “Azuvah died, and Kalev took Efrat as a wife and she gave birth to Chur.” It is also written. “David was an Efrati man.”</p>	<p>במס' סוטה (שם):</p> <p><b>סוטה יא:</b>  ... בתי מלכות – דוד נמי ממרים קאתי,  דכתיב "ותמת עזובה (אשת כלב) ויקח לו  כלב את אפרת ותלד לו את חור, " וכתוב  "ודוד בן איש אפרתי וגו'."</p>
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### C. The Roots of Royalty

The connection between Miriam and David goes beyond a literary allusion – David is an Efrati and Miriam is called Efrat; it goes deeper. Miriam's personal qualities furnished the roots for David Hamelech's royalty.

#### a. Leadership

Miriam was called Acharchel because she was a leader. The Torah doesn't just say that Miriam and the women of Israel sang and danced together, but that the women followed Miriam:

<p><b>8. Shemot 15:20</b>  Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aharon, took the timbrel in her hand; and <b>all of the women went out after her</b> with timbrels and with dances.</p>	<p><b>שמות טו:כ:</b>  וַתִּקַּח מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיאָה אֶחָדָה אֶהָרֵן אֶת הַתֵּף  בְּיָדָהּ וַתֵּצֵאנָה כָּל הַנְּשִׂאִים אַחֲרֶיהָ בְּתִפִּים  וּבַמְחֹלָת.</p>
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Miriam was a role model that people followed. Our ideal of a king is a leader who all of Israel strives to emulate. Miriam's descendant David became that leader.

#### b. Unity

David Hamelech succeeded in uniting the entire People of Israel, not only the tribes of Binyamin (Shaul Hamelech's tribe) and his own Yehudah, but all twelve tribes of Israel. This focus on unity has its antecedents in Miriam, David's ancestor. In the desert, the twelve tribes were organized around the Mishkan, each tribe with its own flag, its own character, its own place. This organization merged them into a unified whole. According to the Midrash, Miriam had a unique place in this system:

<p><b>9. Sifrei Parshat Teitzei Section 65</b>  ... For every time the [tribes and their] banners would travel, they would not move until Miriam first preceded them. Thus it says, "I sent before you Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam" (Michah 6:4).</p>	<p><b>ספרי פרשת תצא פיסקא סה</b>  ... שכל זמן שהיו הדגלים נוסעים לא היו  הולכים עד שמרים מקדמת לפניהם. וכן הוא  אומר "ואשלח לפניו את משה אהרן ומרים"  (מיכה ו:ד).</p>
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According to Harav Shlomo Fisher, שליט"א (p.380 דרשות בית ישי), Miriam guided the traveling of the tribes of Israel according to the order outlined in Parshat Behaalotcha. Preserving the Divinely ordained tribal order prevented jealousy between the tribes (so they do not argue about who goes first) and preserved unity and peace. Because of Miriam's special concern for the unity of the tribes of Israel, she merited to become the ancestor of the king who unified the tribes. Miriam's role is hinted at in a verse in Tehillim where David joyously exclaims that he is king over all of Israel: "לי גלעד ולי מנשה ואפרים מעוז ראשי יהודה מחקקי" – "Mine is Gilad and mine is Menashe; and Efraim the bastion of my head, Yehudah my lawmaker" (Tehillim 60:9 and 108:9). The first letters of the last four words of this verse spell מרים.

#### c. Chesed

The king is a pillar of chesed, providing for the entire nation. There were six people who did not die at the hands of the Angel of Death, but G-d Himself took their souls: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishit Chapter 24 Section 106). The three fathers form a unit, as do the three siblings. In each of the groups there are representatives of the three pillars of the world – תורה, עבודה, וגמילות חסדים – Torah, service (sacrifices and prayer), and lovingkindness (Avot 1:2). These three, in turn, correspond to the three crowns: כתר כהונה, וכתר מלכות, the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty (Avot 4:13). Avraham was connected with chesed, Yitzchak (offered up at the Akeidah) with service, and Yaakov with Torah and truth. Moshe was connected with Torah, Aharon with service, and Miriam with chesed. Yaakov and Moshe got the crown

of Torah; Yitzchak and Aharon the crown of Kehunah; and Avraham and Miriam the crown of royalty (Shelah Pesachim, Matzah Ashirah Drush 2[4]).

## DIGNITY AND SPLENDOR BY RABBI MENDEL FARBER

Aharon leaves Klal Yisrael in this week's Parshah. Hashem tells Moshe, "Take Aharon and Elazar his son and bring them up to the top of the mountain, Hor Hahar. Strip Aharon of his garments and dress Elazar his son in them" (Bamidbar 20:25-26). The כהונה גדולה, the High Priesthood, was being transferred from Aharon to Elazar through the transfer of the clothing.

The Ramban quotes a fascinating Midrash. To avoid either of the two having to stand undressed during the transfer – as Moshe removed each garment from Aharon and Elazar, they were replaced by בגדי שכינה, clothing of the Divine Presence.

Our common conception about clothing is that we wear them only a result of man's sin. This Midrash shows us that this is not so by giving us a glimpse at the בגדי כהונה, the clothing of the כהנים. The בגדי כהונה were not simply garments to adorn the כהן גדול. They were garments that actually sanctified the one who wears them. When they were removed, the קדושה, holiness, materialized into garments of קדושה, בגדי שכינה, garments of the Divine Presence. And when they were put on Elazar he became sanctified with the קדושה of the כהן גדול.

True, clothing came about as a result of man's sin; but that is only one aspect of clothing. After the sin there were certain parts of the body whose exposure arouses a sense of shame in the person and therefore they must be covered. But there is another function for clothing: not to cover, but rather to reveal, to neutralize the exterior of the person so that his פנימיות, his inner essence, can come to the surface.

That is the true meaning of צניעות, of modesty: to deemphasize the exterior so that the interior can become dominant. This second function of clothing reached its heights in the בגדי כהונה, the clothing of the כהנים. The פנימיות of the כהן was embodied in his physical vestments. The Torah says that the clothing of the כהנים were לכבוד ולתפארת, for dignity and for splendor. We dress to stress the dignity and divinity of the human form. That is צניעות.

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at [www.darchenoam.org](http://www.darchenoam.org) & +972-2-651-1178  
5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem

To dedicate a Shapell's Classic Daf Keshet contact  
[emuna@darchenoam.org](mailto:emuna@darchenoam.org)

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Rabbi Eliezer Kwass.

