



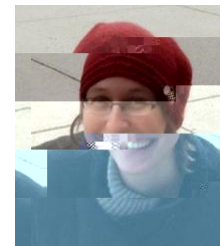
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**Shabbat Hukkat**  
**July 13, 2019 - 10 Tammuz 5779**



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**Rabbi Zushya on Moshe's Transgression**

Torah Reading: Numbers 19:1 - 22:1  
Haftarah Reading: Judges 11:1 - 33

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To Rabbi Zushya, an early Hasidic master who left behind no writings but many stories, belong two of the most darkly encouraging statements about human purpose: to him is attributed the saying, “Each person should have a coat with two pockets—one pocket with a note on which it’s written, ‘I am but dust and ashes,’ and the other pocket with a note on which it’s written, ‘For my sake the world was created.’” Rabbi Zushya is also credited with exclaiming, tearfully, “When I am judged for the World-to-Come, I won’t be asked why I wasn’t more like Moshe, but why I wasn’t more like Zushya.” These statements suggest to us a possibility for understanding the central, wrenching question that confronts us in Parashat Hukkat: What exactly did Moshe do that he was punished so severely, sentenced to die on the far shore of the Jordan—seemingly before completing his life’s mission, and never experiencing the Promised Land?

It is so difficult a question, that Ibn Ezra, after reviewing and refuting seemingly every possibility, concludes that only an esoteric, secret answer could hint at it. The only clue Ibn Ezra provides to his own view is that



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