

חֻקֹּת

CHUKAT/STATUTE Bemidbar/Numbers 19:1-22:1

The title of this week's Parasha is **Chukat**, meaning **statute or ordinance**. In the Torah we see different types of laws categorized as **judgments** (מִשְׁפָּטִים), **commandments** (מִצְוֹת), and **statutes/chukim** (plural for chukat). **Statutes** are ordinances from יהוה (Yahwey) which are **perpetually binding**. These types of laws are to be obeyed because they have been **commanded by יהוה**, not because there is a clear “**rational explanation**” for doing them. Although the reason for following them may not be obvious, it is taught that **chukim bind together the Almighty and man**:

Shemot/Exodus 12:14 'So this day (**Passover**) shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to יהוה throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting **ordinance** (Chukat).

Shemot 12:17 'So you shall observe **the Feast of Unleavened Bread**, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting **ordinance** (Chukat).

Bemidbar 23:41 'You shall keep it as a feast to יהוה for seven days in the year. It shall be a **statute** (Chukat) forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month (**Feast of Tabernacles**).

Shemot 27:20 " And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to **cause the lamp to burn continually**.²¹ "In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before יהוה. It shall be a **statute** (chukat) forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

Bemidbar 15:14 'And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would **present an offering made by fire**, a sweet aroma to יהוה, just as you do, so shall he do.¹⁵ 'One **ordinance** (chukat) shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before יהוה.

The **chukat** that begins our reading is the detailed ritual for the **red heifer sacrifice**. As believers, we see incredible **Messianic symbolism** in the red heifer. The adjective “**red**” is highly suggestive by itself:

- **Red** – (Adom - אָדָם)
 - **Ground, earth** (adumah - אֲדָמָה)
 - **Adam, mankind** (אָדָם)
 - **Blood** (דָּם)

Through these related words, we see how this all points back to **Adam**. **Adam** (אָדָם) was formed from the **ground** (אֲדָמָה). After his sin, it will be the **blood** (דָּם) that will purify **mankind** (אָדָם).

Let's continue with the symbolism:

Bemidbar 19:2 *"This is the ordinance of the law which יְיָ has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come.*

- **Without blemish – Yeshua was without sin.**
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of Yah in Him.*

Bemidbar 19:3 *'You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him;*

- The priests took Yeshua **out of the city gates**.
 - **Mark 15:1** *Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Yeshua, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.*
- Yeshua was **crucified outside of the camp**.
 - **Hebrews 13:12** *Therefore Yeshua also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.*

Bemidbar 19:6 *'And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer.*

- **Cedar wood** – most likely the **horizontal beam that Yeshua was nailed to**. This beam may have been attached to a **fig tree**, conceivably the **same kind of tree** that Adam and Eve **ate from** and also **took leaves from to cover their sins**
 - **Galatians 3:13** *Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),*
- **Hyssop** – also used to sprinkle the blood around the doorpost in Egypt and in the **purification** process of the leper (Bemidbar 14:49)
 - **John 19:29** *Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.³⁰ So when Yeshua had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*
 - **Psalms 51:7** *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
- **Scarlet thread** – literally **scarlet worm**. In Psalm 22, a very Messianic Psalm, Yeshua (through David) calls Himself a “**worm**”. This **worm must sacrifice itself** to provide the **scarlet color**. Yeshua compares himself to this lowly sacrifice as **He took the scarlet sin of mankind** upon Himself:

- *Psalm 22:6 But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people.*
- *Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says יהוה, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.*
- *Matthew 27:27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Yeshua into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.²⁸ And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.*

Bemidbar 19:17 'And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and living water shall be put on them in a vessel.

- **Ashes** (also **dust** - עָפָר) – **Yeshua is the son of Adam....** he was formed from the **dust** (עָפָר). The **ashes** must then be combined with **living water**.
 - *Genesis 2:7 And יהוה Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*
 - *Genesis 13:16 "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.*
- **Living water** (mayim chayim - מַיִם חַיִּים)
 - *John 7:38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*
 - *Jeremiah 17:13 O יהוה, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. "Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken יהוה, The fountain of living waters."*

Okay...let's summarize the major events of this week's narrative:

1. **Death** of the red heifer
2. **Death** of Miriam
3. Moses strikes the rock and as a result is told he will **die** before entering the Promised Land
4. **Death** of Aaron
5. Serpent on a pole and **death** of many Israelites

Do you see the connection between each of these events? Every one of them is about **death**. We begin with the **death** of the red heifer. Then we come to Bemidbar 20, and it is not obvious, but we have jumped ahead 38 years. It is amazing that except for Bereshith (Genesis), the bulk of the Torah centers around just a few years...**the first couple years following the Exodus, and the year of the entry into the Promised Land**. In the intervening period, **a generation unceremoniously died** as they wandered through the wilderness.

I would like to propose that all of these events are **shadows** of future events that must happen as a part of the 2nd **Exodus**. Keep in mind that every portion of Scripture contains **several layers of**

teaching. This is especially true of **Torah.** My premise is that these **deaths** symbolize things of the **flesh** and everything which **must be put to death before we gain our entrance into the Promised Land.** **Death will conquer death, and out of death will spring life!** One more thing....**the historical events** of Torah are **prophetic pictures of the future.** We are to learn from their **example** that we might be a part of their **intended fulfillment** (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Let's begin with the first event:

1. Red Heifer Sacrifice

As mentioned before, the instructions for the red heifer ritual were **given towards the beginning of the exodus.** We know that the red heifer **has Messianic** implications, but is it only about **salvation?**

When Adam was created, the Almighty breathed into Him the **Spirit of life.** But it wasn't long before as a **result of his eating of the fruit** of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that the phenomenon of **death** became part of the human experience. **Death** is the consequence of the first sin and it is **constantly contaminating us.** **Before the death of Yeshua,** the red heifer sacrifice was the ritual יהוה gave His people **to cleanse them** from the defilement of **death.** Of course before the death and resurrection of Yeshua, it was difficult to understand the **reasoning** behind the ritual. Today we can reflect back on the **symbolism** and be amazed.

An Israelite was **defiled by any contact with the dead.** If your relative died and you had to bury them, you became **unclean.** An open container with the remains of the **dead** in it defiled everyone in the room. If you failed to follow the ritual and you didn't get cleansed, then **your presence in the holy sanctuary would also bring defilement there.** This would bring about the **risk of driving away יהוה's presence** from among His people. Thus the **cleansing** by the ashes of the Red Heifer is more analogous to **a day by day purification** than **eternal salvation.** Today **Yeshua cleanses** us every day so that **we might enter into His Presence.** He does this so that we might **serve and worship** Him (**our bodies are also a temple**), in the same way that the Israelites had to be **purified** before they could **serve and worship in the tabernacle/temple.**

Hebrews 10:22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hebrews 9:13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to Yah, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim?

Therefore, the **Red Heifer** is a picture of **sanctification and purification....our day to day cleansing,** because we still have a bit of a **problem.** The problem is we are still in **contact** with a **dead body....OUR OWN!**

*Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.²² For I delight in the Torah of Yah according to the inward man.²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.²⁴ O wretched man that I am! **Who will deliver me from this body of death?**²⁵ I thank Yah -- through Yeshua the Messiah our Adonai!*

Upon our future **resurrection from the dead**, we will be delivered from this “**body of death**”. Until then, **we must approach Him every day** with our need for **forgiveness and cleansing**. The **comprehension** of this **necessary, daily purification** is a **first step in our maturity** as we set our sites towards the Promised Land.

2. Death of Miriam

Thirty-eight years later, the first thing this **new generation** experiences is the **death of Miriam**:

*Bemidbar 20:1 Then the children of Israel, the whole **congregation** (witness -עֵדוּת), came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in **Kadesh** (holy -קֹדֶשׁ); and **Miriam died there** and was buried there.*

The first thing we notice from this verse is the Torah **emphasizing** that we are dealing with **ALL of Israel... the ENTIRE congregation**. In fact, the word for **congregation** is edah (עֵדוּת) and comes from the word for “**witness**”. There seems to be a sort of **unity** now that the **doomed generation** has all **died**. And it is very interesting that the place where they are staying is **Kadesh** (קֹדֶשׁ), the word for “**sacred**” or “**holy**.”

Miriam dies there...her name means **rebellion** (מִרְיָם), but it is not possible to say that **for this generation**, it was the end of their **rebellion**. For what we see are two more episodes of **rebellion**, one of which will cost Moses and Aaron entrance into the Promised Land. But what is the **prophetic layer** of this verse? Could it be that there will be **a year in our future** when **all of Israel**, all of the **witnesses** (עֵדוּת), will attain a level of **holiness** (Kadesh - קֹדֶשׁ) and will have put away **rebellion** (Miriam - מִרְיָם)? Hopefully we can learn from their **example** (1 Corinthians 10:11) and truly put down “**rebellion in our camp**” as we head for the Promised Land.

3. Moses strikes the rock

Moses is synonymous with the **written Word of Torah** throughout Scripture. **Moses** pictures our **Messiah** over and over again in his **many roles**. The **Torah** points a person to **salvation**, but it is **faith alone** that **BRINGS** one to **salvation**.

*Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been **saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of Yah,⁹ **not of works**, lest anyone should boast.*

Look at the **reason** יְהוָה gives for not allowing Moses to bring the people into the **Promised Land**:

Bemidbar 20:12 Then יהוה spoke to Moses and Aaron, "**Because you did not believe Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.**"

It was a **faith issue** that kept Moses from walking into the Promised Land. **Moses** was an **incredible man**. Moses was anointed by יהוה to receive all the **instructions of the Torah** for leading a **life filled with good works**. His life is a **Torah picture of "good works"**...yet we know as believers that **"good works"** are not enough to earn one his **salvation**.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of Yah,

For a moment, **Moses got caught up in works**. His instructions were to **speak** to the **rock**.

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,...⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. **For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Messiah.**

Frustrated, Moses remembered that he had **struck the rock before** and water had come out. יהוה was attempting to teach the people a **spiritual principle**, but Moses took it down to the **physical level**. In doing so, he did not **sanctify** the Almighty and paid the price.

Does that mean that Moses **will not** be in the Promised Land? **He will WITHOUT A DOUBT be there!** **Moses, whose life symbolizes good works, fulfilled the Torah picture that teaches good works alone will not take you to the Promised Land.** It is therefore **Joshua, whose name means salvation, who becomes the picture of Messiah, the One who will lead the people into the Land.**

4. Death of Aaron

Aaron and his descendents represent the **earthly, Levitical priesthood**. There is a priesthood, however, that is **greater** than the Levitical priesthood. The Torah makes mention of it in Bereshith (Genesis) and it is further explained for us in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 7:1 For this **Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High Yah, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,**² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "**king of righteousness,**" and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"³ without father, **without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of Yah, remains a priest continually.**⁴ Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.⁵ And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the Torah, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham;⁶ but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.⁷ Now beyond all contradiction **the lesser is blessed by the better.**⁸ Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.⁹ **Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak,**¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.¹¹ Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further

need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?

I see the **death of Aaron** as symbolically representing **the point in time when all of Israel will recognize Yeshua as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek**, a superior priesthood. Here is how Torah records Aaron's death:

***Bemidbar 20:23** And אֱלֹהִים spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: ²⁴ "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. ²⁵ "Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; ²⁶ "and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there." ²⁷ So Moses did just as אֱלֹהִים commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. ²⁸ Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.*

What I find interesting in this passage is that Aaron's garments are placed on his son, **Eleazar**. The simple meaning of Eleazar's name is "**El is my help**." If you look up the **etymology** of the word "**help**", however, you see that it means "**help in a manner that reduces another's responsibilities**." That kind of reminds me of **another priest, John the Baptist**, who said:

***John 3:30** "He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Along with recognizing the **superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek**, comes the **realization** that now **we are ALL priests** and must take on the **responsibility** of the **priesthood**...namely **servicing others and teaching Torah**:

***Matthew 23:11** "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.*

***Malachi 2:7** "For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the Torah from his mouth; For he is the messenger of אֱלֹהִים of hosts.*

5. Serpent on a pole and death of many Israelites

Let's take a look at what **initially** caused this event:

***Bemidbar 21:5** And the people spoke against Elohim and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." **6** So אֱלֹהִים sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.*

The **gripe** of this **second generation** looks nearly the same as the **complaint of their fathers**. They think things looked better in Egypt. But the **horrifying complaint** that they made was against the **bread...the divine manna from heaven!** **Yeshua** compared Himself to this **bread** and their

rejection of it brought about **immediate judgment** from יהוה. It's as if the people were taken **out from under the protection** of the Almighty and **placed into the realm of the evil serpent**.

Despite their **rebellion**, there seems to be a certain amount of **maturity** in at least some of these **second generation Israelites**, and they **recognize instantly that the serpents are a divine plague** due to their **rejection of His provision**:

***Bemidbar 21:7** Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against יהוה and against you; pray to יהוה that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.*

The people recognize the importance of **repentance** and their need for an **intercessor**. יהוה's solution:

***Bemidbar 21:8** Then יהוה said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

Looking at the bronze serpent was Israel's **protection against the consequences of judgment**. The fiery serpents still remained in the camp, but יהוה protected His people from the consequences of their bite. Today, in **repentance**, we also gaze upwards to **Yeshua who carried our rebellion** (following the **serpent**) upon Himself:

***John 3:14** "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,¹⁵ "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

The **identification** of the **serpent with the Messiah** is made stronger by considering that the gematria of **serpent** (שָׂרָפָן - see 2 King 18:4) is **358**... the same as **Messiah** (מָשִׁיחַ).

Now, let's take this incident to that **prophetic mode of the 2nd Exodus**. At the beginning of this incident, there are still **a group of people** who **reject the bread (the Messiah)** and are killed by the serpents. These people have been **with the group nearly 40 years**. **They look like Israelites, acted like Israelites, and most of the time talked like Israelites**. Yet their mouths reveal what's in their hearts. **They did not recognize the manna...Yeshua... as the divine provision**. It reminds me of the **parable** that Yeshua told concerning the **harvest**:

***Matthew 13:24** Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;²⁵ "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.²⁶ "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.²⁷ "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'²⁸ "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'²⁹ "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.'³⁰ 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I*

will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "

The end of the ages will see the **Almighty separating out His remnant** from those who have been “**along for the ride**”.

Let's **summarize this prophetic picture** of the process to occur at the **end of days**:

1. **Red Heifer sacrifice – purification and sanctification** of Israel made possible through the **death of Messiah**. This is where we are **today** as we recognize that **sin is Torahlessness** (1 John 3:4) and we must **seek the Father's forgiveness daily** as we **pursue holiness**.
2. **Death of Miriam** – end of **rebellion, death of the flesh**...obviously we're not there yet.
3. **Moses strikes the rock** and is denied entrance into the Promised Land – complete realization that **works without faith bring death, not salvation**. It is **Yeshua, not Moses** that will take us into the Promised Land.
4. **Death of Aaron** – symbolizes the taking on of our duties as **priests of the order of Melchizedek**, including **servant hood** and teaching **Torah**
5. **Serpent on a pole and death of many Israelites** – the sorting process of **יהוה** to find those who truly **know Yeshua** and **keep the commandments (they followed the instruction to look at the serpent on the pole)**. They are those who **live!**

Death came into the world as a result of **sin**. But the **paradox** is that **יהוה** over and over again uses the **concept of death** to bring about **life!** And **life** takes us back to the **Garden** where we can once more **dwell with the Father!**

1 Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."⁵⁵ "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of Yah is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. Yah Himself will be with them and be their Adonai."⁴ "And Yah will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Just “one more thing” here:

Bemidbar 21:4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.

Nearly 40 years have passed, and now the people find themselves at the **Red Sea... right where they started!** Have they really made **no progress at all?** Yet, this is exactly where **יהוה** meant to **take them**. This **new generation** would have to compensate for the **mistakes of their fathers**. They would have to begin as if “**they had just come out of Egypt.**” For those of you who keep the **Passover**, you will recognize this concept. For we know that we also have “**come out of Egypt.**”

Shemot 13:14 "So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand **יְיָ** brought **us** out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Now it's **our turn for testing**. The question is...**are you willing to learn from their example?**

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle