

Parashah #39

(Updated for 7.2.11)

Chukat ~ חוקות ~ Statute/Regulation

Torah: B'midbar/Numbers 19:1~22:1

Haftarah: Shof'tim/Judges 11:1-33

B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 3:9-21; 4:3-30; 12:27-50

Our Parashah this week is (coo-kaht) Chukat. This Hebrew word shares the same root as a previous Torah portion. The last portion of *Vayikra/Leviticus*, known as Parashah (b-koo-koh-tie) B'chukkotai also comes from our root word. This Torah portion's title from the root (coke) *choke*, means *law, regulation, ordinance*. This should not be confused with its synonym, Torah, which sometimes is also translated law. The main difference is what each word actually conveys:

- choke = law
- Torah = teaching.

Obedience to the Torah has been misunderstood for way too long, both in the Hebrew and Christian communities. Torah observance is a matter of the heart; it always has been, and always will be. For Christians, Torah is about how to live our lives AFTER we receive Yeshua. (Yochanan/John 14:15 "If you love me keep my commandmentS" . . . not just SOME of them!!!!)

Besides *B'reshet/Genesis*, I believe this parashah has more important events than any other Torah portion. Here, we learn about . . .

- the ashes of the red cow
- the waters of *M'rivah/Meribah*
- the deaths of Miryam and Aharon
- the raised up snake
- the first battles of the new generation

By the way . . . *M'rivah/Meribah* is Hebrew for *Disputation*.

One commentary asks "Are there any other (para-shoat) parashot (plural for parashah/portion) which contain more mysteries than this one? What is the mystery of the red cow? How and why did it work? What specifically was the sin of Moshe which forfeited his entrance to the Promised Land? How did looking at a bronze snake on a pole cure those who had been bitten by real serpents?"

Because of these many questions, this week's Torah portion comments could be referred to as "Mini-Mysteries!" They would be . . .

- The Red Cow
- The Sin of Moshe and Aharon
- Death and Denial
- The Healing Snake

- The Secret Writings

Once again, if we get everything covered in our allotted time, it definitely will be a MIRACLE!!!!

CHAPTER 19

Our Parashah begins with the mitzvah of the Red Heifer (**verse 1**), referred to as (Pah-rah Ah-due-mah) **Parah Adumah**, literally **Red Cow**, which is a peculiar command indeed. For that matter, it is beyond understanding! Rashi states, “It is a decree of the One Who gave Torah and it is not for anyone to question it.” Furthermore, “as the Sages expressed it, there is nothing meaningless or purposeless in the Torah, and if it seems so, it is only a product of our own deficiency.” (Rambam)

First, this cow without blemish is to be slaughtered and completely burned. Do you remember reading in *Vayikra/Leviticus* about touching a dead animal’s carcass? Doing so renders one (tah-may) **tamei/ritually unclean**.

It is important to remember, being unclean is not a sin. Research teaches us Torah regards attending to the dead and escorting them to burial is a very great mitzvah. Uncleanness is relevant to entering the Tabernacle/Temple or consuming the sacrifices. As Torah says “Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the Tabernacle of Yehovah.” (**verse 13**)

Verse 6 tells us the **Cohen/priest** is to take cedar-wood, hyssop and scarlet yarn and throw them on the heifer as it is burning. The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash tells us the Red Cow atoned for the sin of the Golden Calf.

1. Its color is red, which symbolizes sin (**Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 1:18**)
2. It was not ever to have borne a yoke, to symbolize a sinner, who cast off Yehovah’s yoke from himself
3. It was burned, just as Aharon had cast gold into a fire to produce the calf.

The ritual involves the use of cedar-wood, hyssop and a thread dyed with the blood of a worm. This combination signifies sin and repentance. A sinner has been haughty like a lofty cedar tree. In order to gain atonement, he must humble himself like a blade of hyssop grass and a lowly worm. We are reminded in **Vayikra/Leviticus 14:4** the same items were used with a clean bird for the cleansing of (zah-rah-aht) **tzara’at/skin disease**.

As we read our current portion, in **verses 7-22**, the preparation of the ashes also rendered the individuals involved (tah-may) **tamei/ritually unclean**. On the other hand, the result of their effort had the supernatural ability to cleanse. Granted, the real healing always comes from Yehovah, but in this case the focal point of the healing, the ash mixture, began by defiling those

who made the mixture. Every person involved in the process of the red heifer becomes unclean:

- 1 The priest who oversees the slaughter and the burning.
- 2 The man who ignites the fire.
- 3 The one who gathers the ashes.
- 4 The man who sprinkles the water on the unclean person. (verse 21)

They all become unclean. What a paradox!!!

One Torah teacher suggested a red heifer was killed to make the coverings for Adam and Eve since there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood.

Verse 9 tells us a pure man is to gather the ash of the cow and place it outside the camp in a pure place. According to the commentary in the Chumash, the ashes were divided into three parts.

- 1 One part was stored on the Mount of Olives for future use, either to purify the Kohen performing the service in the future or to mix with the ashes of future Red Cows.
- 2 Another part was divided among the twenty-four divisions of Kohanim, for use in purifying people
- 3 The third part was required to be kept in the (Khail) Chail, an area next to the wall of the Courtyard, for safekeeping.

Upon careful reading in verse 10, we learn this is a **permanent regulation** for the people of Israel AND for the foreigner staying with them.

Verses 11-14 indicate an individual who became contaminated by touching a corpse must purify himself with these ashes on the third day and the seventh day. Actually on day three and day seven, the individual is to be sprinkled with the purifying water (like a shower, perhaps?) and then the individual is to *mikveh/immerse* (like, take a bath). I found this interesting because of some research by Dr. Jordan Rubin, a Messianic Jewish Physician. Following is a portion of an article he wrote:

- **How to Get Sick: Shower Every Day, but Don't Take a Bath:** “For their convenience, showers in many ways have won out over baths in our culture. In fact, many contemporary apartments and homes have only shower stalls in them and no bathtubs. Although it may seem the only option for many, showering – especially in excess – can actually rob your hair and body of their natural oils. It can also alter your body's pH (especially if you're using certain alkaline shampoos and soaps). If the Maker has a preference, it might be the use of ritual bathing that combined washing in a shallow bath and sprinkling (showering for brief periods).”

Back to the cleansing process: why two days? And, why these two specific days? Looking up

the spiritual meaning of these two numbers revealed the following:

- Three is the number of restoration.
- Seven is the number of spiritual perfection and completeness.

So maybe this helps with the understanding of “why”! Also, the Hebrew word for *seven* is *shevah*. I wonder if all of this plays into today’s tradition of “sitting sheva”. When a Hebrew person dies, the family “sits shevah”, literally, they do not shave, bathe, wash hair, etc for seven days. During this time, family and friends come and sometimes “sit shevah” with them or at least a portion of the time.

This reminded me of an incident concerning my friends, Ron & Carol Cantrell, who lived in Israel approximately 18 years. A few years ago, Ron was involved in a bus bombing in downtown Jerusalem. Long story short, when he finally got home, although he was physically uninjured, he was in a state of shock. Carol said Ron “sat shevah” for the entire week in honor of those who lost their lives in the bombing, although he knew none of them personally.

The secret of faith is to follow Yehovah’s instructions to the letter and live in trusting, obedient, faithfulness. To do what the Torah instructs sometimes requires one to perform various rituals and functions although they defy logic and common sense. If we reduce the Torah to legalistic misunderstandings, we judge Yehovah’s words. **BEING SELECTIVE OF SCRIPTURE IS IDOLATRY!!!** In other words, choosing which scripture you will and won’t obey puts you in a position of becoming your own god. This is idolatry. Remember, Yeshua’s words? “If you love me, keep my commandments.” (Yochanan/John 14:15) His statement refers to Torah (the only Word there was when He was preaching the “good news”!) Another reminder which is additional confirmation is in Ya’akov/James 4:12. “There is one Lawgiver who is able to . . . save”

Before we leave this subject, it is amazing how the sacrifice of the Red Heifer foreshadows the sacrifice of Yeshua. The Red Heifer was taken outside the camp to be offered as a sacrifice to cleanse people from death contamination. Yeshua was taken outside the “camp”, outside of Jerusalem, to be offered as a sacrifice for our sins, which otherwise lead to spiritual death.

When we accept Yehovah on His terms and His terms only, we have no choice but to accept His sacrificial offering, whether it was the Red Heifer then or Messiah now! This is not legalism, too harsh thinking, or even "narrow-mindedness". This is pure LOVE! If it hadn’t been for Yeshua (of whom the Red Heifer was a type and shadow) providing the only way back to the Father, we would all be without hope!

CHAPTER 20

It is important to understand where we are in our timeline at this point. B’nei Isra’el has been led through the desert for approximately 38 years. Miryam dies and is buried in Kadesh. (verse

1) One commentary indicates Miryam died on the 10th of Nissan. If the people “sat shevah” as they do today, the date would be Nissan 17th. Is this a strange parallel to Passover, perhaps? The 10th being the day the lamb was taken to be examined; the day Yeshua rode into *Yerushalayim/Jerusalem* on the donkey.

When Miriam died, the water ceased to flow. When Messiah died, the water of life ceased to flow. But here is an amazing possibility. If Miriam died on Nissan 10, as Jewish tradition purports, and if Moses and Aharon mourned for seven days before striking the rock, an amazing correlation between the story of the rock and the story of the resurrection emerges. Messiah rose from the dead on the seventeenth day of the month of Nissan. If Miriam died on the tenth day of Nissan, and Moses and Aaron waited seven days before striking the rock, then the water flowed forth afresh on the seventeenth day of Nissan – the same day on which Messiah left the tomb!

Immediately after Torah tells of Miryam’s death, it tells us, in **verse 2**, “There was no water for the congregation.” The people begin to complain AGAIN!!! At one time I commented, “same song, second verse” but I stand corrected. The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash offers the following commentary on **verses 3-5**. “That the people needed water is understandable, but that they should, by the vehemence of their complaint, repeat the sins of the previous generations is puzzling. A comparison of this passage with earlier protests however, shows the differences. They did not complain about meat or the bland nature of the manna, as their elders had; they demanded water, and as Rashi notes, death by thirst is a horrifying prospect. Nor did they say they wanted to return to Egypt. When they asked, rhetorically, why Moses had taken them from Egypt, they meant he should have led them on a route that would afford at least such a basic necessity as drinking water. Yehovah is indulgent of people who have a legitimate complaint, even when they voice it more provocatively than they should (Or HaChaim).”

Have you ever noticed our problems come when we get our eyes focused on ourselves, our needs, and our desires? And our problems seem to compound when we try to get involved in how our neighbor lives his/her life. The more we are able to fix our gaze on Him and His provisions for us, the more life has meaning and the things of this world just do not seem to matter as much.

In **verse 6** Moshe & Aharon fall on their faces AGAIN!!! And the (kah-vode) *kavod/glory* of Yehovah appeared to them AGAIN!!! Yehovah is a merciful Yehovah! He speaks to Moshe, in **verse 7**, “tell **the rock** to produce its water”.

More commentary from The Chumash, on **verse 8**, says the definite article “**the**” indicates this was a known rock. The Sages teach Yehovah created a rock He used often as a source of miraculous waters. This was the rock . . .

- 1 The angel revealed to Hagar when her son Ishmael was dying of thirst (**B’resheet/Genesis 21:19**).

- 2 Moses was commanded to draw water from nearly forty years earlier (**Sh'mot/Exodus 17:6**)
- 3 And the same rock accompanied the people through out their wanderings in the wilderness.

I checked into the original Hebrew and sure enough, the Alef and the Tav were used. As we know those are “the beginning and the end” of the Hebrew aleph-bet, “the first and the last” letters. (Alpha and Omega, if you are into Greek.) I believe Yeshua is the One who followed them! This may sound preposterous but no more so than manna appearing every day or quail miraculously dropping in quantities approximately three feet or so deep!! Even the Sages taught it, in an ancient commentary, The Mechilta. And there is scripture to back it up! Not in the Torah but it is in the Bible. One of the greatest Torah observant, Torah teachers, **Rav Sha'ul/Paul** spoke of it in **1st Corinthian 10:4**, “. . . all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah.”

Sela (say-la) is a Hebrew word meaning **rock** or **boulder**. It was a **sela** which Moses struck with his rod after being commanded by Yehovah to speak to it in **B'midbar/Numbers 20:7-10** and water nevertheless poured forth from it. A different word **tzur** is used in **Sh'mot/Exodus 17:6** where he was commanded to strike it. Others from the many places where **sela** appears include:

- He made him (Israel) ride in the heights of the earth, that he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw **honey from the rock (sela)** and oil from the flinty rock" (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 32:13**).
- **YHVH is my rock (sela)** and my fortress and my deliverer. (**Sh'mu'el Alef/II Samuel 22:2**).
- He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly. he will dwell on high; **his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks (sela)**; bread will be given him, his water will be sure. Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. (**Yesha'hayu/Isaiah 33:15-17a**)
- You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, and brought them **water out of the rock (sela) for their thirst**, and told them to go in to possess the land which You had sworn to give them. (**Nechemiah/Nehemiah 9:15**).
- He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and **set my feet upon a rock (sela)**, and established my steps. (**Tehillim/Psalm 40:2**).

In **verse 11** frustration sets in and Moshe hits the rock. This costs him his entrance into the Promised Land. Moshe was incredibly faithful performing all Yehovah asked him to do. However, even Moshe was not perfect. The pressure mounted and, in a moment of anger, he struck the rock, not once but twice, when he was commanded to **speak to it!!!** He dishonored Yehovah in the sight of all Isra'el. It was for this reason Yehovah would not allow Moshe to

enter The Land to which he was leading the people. He would only be allowed to gaze at it from afar. In spite of Moshe's disobedience, water did flow from the rock to meet the community's physical need. Yet, along with Yehovah's mercy, we see a reminder of His requirements of responsibility especially for **Chosen Leaders**. Moshe was in a "high visibility" position, the greater the calling, the greater the responsibility. Moshe was not in a position to blatantly disobey Yehovah. His call was a higher one. Therefore, Yehovah expected more from him. Remember Torah says this was the man who spoke to Yehovah (pah-neem l'pah-neem) *panim l'panim/face to face* and mouth to mouth.

Verses 14-17 find us at the border to the land of Edom, definitely not a friendly situation! Acting in a manner of cordiality and humility, Moshe offers to pass through the land of the Edomites without disturbing what belongs to Edom. He even uses the identification marker of "brother" highlighting the well known fact of Edom being a descendant of Esav, the brother of Ya'akov – from whom the Israelites descended. Despite his gentle pleadings with Edom, Israel is refused passage. Edom says, (**verses 18-21**) in today's vernacular, "Don't even think about it!" They even issued a threat of the sword.

Isra'el traveled from Kadesh, where Miryam died, to **Mount Hor**, literally "*mountain of the mountain*", where Aharon would be "gathered to his people". I think Torah has interesting ways of saying "he's gonna die." Here, at Mount Hor, Aharon's mantle was passed on to his son, El'azar. In **B'midbar/Numbers 33:39-40**, according to the Artscroll Chumash, Aharon died on the first of Av in the 40th year of wandering in the Wilderness, at the age of 123 years. As we know he was succeeded by his son, El'azar, and before Aharon died, he had the satisfaction of seeing his son clothed in the garments of the (Koe-hen Gah-dole) **Kohen Gadol/High Priest**. Apparently, it was Moshe's responsibility to remove the priestly garments from Aharon and put them on El'azar. When Moshe and El'azar came down the mountain the people saw Aharon was dead and they mourned Aharon for **thirty** days. (**verses 22-29**)

Thirty is a number associated with death, mourning and sorrow. Other scriptures alluding to the same, in addition to **B'midbar/Numbers 20:29**, are . . .

- **D'varim/Deuteronomy 34:8**, Moshe's death and
- **Mattityahu/Matthew 26:15** referring to Yeshua being sold by Judas for 30 silver coins.

Can we begin to imagine how Moshe must have felt by this time? Within a relatively short span of time, approximately four months, there is the death of two of the community's great leaders, Miryam and Aharon, two from the same family no less! Moshe has lost all members of his immediate family.

A glimpse into the personal lives of those who lived during this period reveals these were ordinary folks just like you and me! They laughed, played, hoped, feared, loved, and cried just like we do. Perhaps we should be less critical when examining the lives of these ordinary desert-dwelling folks. I sometimes wonder if we would have done any better, were we in their

“shoes”, er – uh, make that sandals.

CHAPTER 21

Since Edom had denied B’nei Isra’el passage through their land, Isra’el had no choice but to comply with Edom, and go the long way around. In this chapter, we read the King of Arad, heard Israel was approaching so he attacked and took some captive. I’m impressed by the boldness of Israel at this point (**verses 2 & 3**). Moshe vows to Yehovah he will completely destroy the people and their cities. He does so and that place was named ***Hormah, complete destruction***, in Hebrew.

It’s amazing to me B’nei Israel has just seen the mighty hand of Yehovah; they saw they were empowered to defeat the enemy. They destroyed all the enemy had, yet they became ill-tempered because they had to take a detour. Here we go AGAIN!!! In **verses 4-9** the people speak against Yehovah and Moshe so Yehovah sends poisonous snakes into the camp and a lot of people died. At least, this time, they became repentant and asked Moshe to intercede on their behalf to make the snakes go away. At the direction of Yehovah, Moshe fashions a bronze snake and puts it on a pole. If a person had been bitten by a snake, they were to **look up** to the bronze snake and live. Notice, it doesn’t say Yehovah took the snakes away. This translates into . . . don’t expect the L~rd to always remove your problems from you, rather **look up** to Him and He will take care of you.

Some of you may already be aware of this but it wasn’t until I read this portion several years ago when Yehovah gave me a new understanding concerning the Caduceus, a symbol used by the medical profession. It actually is a staff with one or two snakes wrapped around it. Did you ever wonder where it came from and why? I’m tellin’ ya!!! There is more Hebrew influence in the world than most people will ever know!!!



Last year I received the following email: ***I thought you might want to check this out. I ran across this in my studies since the commentators connected this to our modern culture. I'm thinking given our Hellenistic culture this is where the connection is birthed.*** When I went to Wikipedia to check out this persons information I found the following:

- **Asclepius** is the god of medicine and healing in ancient Greek religion. The rod of Asclepius, a snake-entwined staff, remains a symbol of medicine today, although sometimes the caduceus, or staff with two snakes, is mistakenly used instead.

It is NO surprise to me the Hellenistic culture would try to take a matter which is very obviously scriptural and try to make it appear as though it was original in the Greek culture. Hasn't the enemy always tried to profane the holy?!

In **verses 10-15** we get a detailed description of their journeys. Then in **verse 16** the people went on to (Beh-ehr) *Be'er*, which means *well*. There they assembled and Yehovah provided water for them and they sang a song "Spring up, oh well!" The Sages tell us **verses 19 & 20** trace the path of the well as it followed the people wherever they went, no matter what the elevation or difficulty of the terrain. Hmm, reminds me of ***Mattit'yahu/Matthew 28:20*** when the Master spoke ". . . lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Verses 18b-20 have some interesting information when we know the meaning of certain Hebrew words. "From the desert they went to (Mah-tahn-nah) **Mattanah** ; from Mattanah to (Nahk-ahlee-el) **Nachali'el**; from Nachali'el to (Bah-moat) **Bamot**."

A breakdown of the literal Hebrew words works like this:

- 1 B'midbar=desert (where Torah was given)**
- 2 Mattanah=gift**
- 3 Nachali'el=inheritance from Yehovah**
- 4 Bamot=elevated places**

The verses and their midrashic explanation are discussed in the following Talmudic passage: "The princes dug the well; the nobles of the people hollowed it, by the law-giver, with their staffs. From the desert they went to Mattanah; from Mattanah to Nachali'el; from Nachali'el to Bamot. (**verses 18-19**) Why does it say, "From the desert they went to Mattanah"? If a man makes himself like a desert, abandoning himself to all (Rashi: "He teaches Torah to everyone free-of-charge."), then Torah will be given to him as a gift (Mattanah), as it says, "From the desert to Mattanah." Since it is given to him as a gift, he will inherit it from G-d (nachali'El), as it says, "from Mattanah to Nachli'el." Since he inherited it from G-d, he will become elevated to greatness, as it says, "from Nachli'el to Bamot (elevated places)." (Nedarim 55a)

Please remember and understand I don't place an emphasis on Midrashic or Talmudic teachings but there are some, like this one, which are quite interesting and make sense.

In **verses 21-35**, Isra'el requests permission from Sichon, king of the Emori and his response to them was the same as the Edomites. However, Sichon takes to the offensive and attacks Isra'el. Yehovah intervenes and Isra'el defeats the Emori. Following this successful campaign, Yehovah instructs Moshe to muster a small army and go against Og, the king of Bashan. Moshe does and Yehovah causes a great victory there as well, with the complete destruction of those in opposition to '*Am Yisra'el/the People of Isra'el*. Amazingly, this is the precise setting for our Haftarah portion of **Shof'tim/Judges 11:1-33**.

This is a glimpse into the beginnings of the intense land disputes the people would find themselves involved in for quite a while. As a matter of fact, it continues to this very day! The promises of Yehovah did not come without a struggle. The Promised Land was not just "handed over" to the people. To secure what was theirs by covenant right, the people would have to scratch and struggle for it. The Torah will always serve to remind us we all fall short of the goal, when we try to accomplish things our own way, whether it be the grumbling of a desert weary people waiting to find a home, or the everyday life of a believer in Yeshua.

CHAPTER 22

This part of our Torah portion closes with the people poised just opposite of (Yehr-ree-koe) *Yericho/Jericho* on the border of the *Yarden/Jordan* River. Poised and ready to go in? Or poised to face another challenge from Yehovah? Were the people really ready, after defeating Og and Sichon, to enter the Land of Promise? Only time will tell!

Chukat ~ חֻקֵּי ~ Statute/Regulation

Haftarah: Shof'tim/Judges 11:1-33

Our leading character in this story is a man named (Yeef-tahk) *Yiftach/Japheth*. In the opening few lines, he is outcast from his family because he was the son of a prostitute, which in Hebrew terminology would have made him a (mahm-zehr) *mamzer/bastard*. Nevertheless, he was a brave soldier.

This was the time of the wars with various inhabitants of the Land of *Kena'an/Canaan*. The offspring of Avraham were finally dwelling within the Promised Land, but they continued to be disobedient and wicked. Yehovah would constantly use the surrounding foreign peoples to "get His children's attention". Sometimes they would go into captivity, and at other times the Almighty would send a deliverer such as the brave *D'vorah/Deborah* or the mighty *Shimshon/Samson*. Such is the theme of the book of (Showf-teem) *Shof'tim/Judges*, as is aptly described in *Shof'tim/Judges 3:1-7* (please take time to go back and look up this passage).

Our immediate parallel between the Torah portion and the haftarah is found in *verses 12-22*, where Yiftach, now chosen as a leader of the people, is delegating negotiations with the attacking king of the people of 'Amon. In his message to the enemy king, he relates the story we read about in our current Torah portion in *B'midbar/Numbers 20:14-22:1*.

As Yiftach tells the king of 'Amon, their journeys took them into close proximity to some territorial enemies of theirs. Again, the same invitation is offered to them as with the Edomites. Sichon, king of the Emori, took the offence and attacked Isra'el. As Yiftach elaborated, the Almighty intervened and Isra'el defeated the Emori all the way up to the borders of the people of 'Amon – the very people and king he is now negotiating with. As the Torah portion tells us, following this successful campaign, Yehovah instructed Moshe to muster a small army and go

against Og the king of Bashan as well. Moshe did and Yehovah caused a great victory there as well, result-ing in the complete destruction of those opposing the *people of Israel/Am Yisra'el*.

Peace, in the Land promised to Avraham, Yitz'chak, and Ya'akov, was not impossible! But gross disobedience, as foreseen by Moshe in **D'varim/Deuteronomy 31**, kept the people from living to the full potential the Almighty had planned. Consequently, various enemy kings frequently came against them. They were enslaved time and time again.

The pattern in *Shof'tim/Judges* is painful:

- 1 The people did what was right in the sight of Yehovah, and He blessed them with shalom;
- 2 They did what was evil in His sight, and He sent them into the captive hands of their enemies!

The Torah is Yehovah's measuring rod for disobedience. This is what He said in **D'varim / Deuteronomy 31:26**. Even the *B'rit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant Scriptures* echo this same teaching consistently throughout the book of Romans. This happens, the Torah teaches us in both the Tanakh and the B'rit Hadashah, "in order that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world be shown to deserve Yehovah's adverse judgment. For in His sight no one alive will be considered righteous . . . (**Tehillim/Psalm 143:2; Romans 3:19**)." The Holy One was training them to become dependant upon His grace alone to get them out of "hot water". The enemies they encountered on their way "Home" as well as the ones they met while dwelling in The Land were indeed "hot"!

This is why Yehovah established the elaborate system of sacrifice (such as the Red Heifer we read about in our Torah portion). They must be taught to operate according to trust. Genuine trust implies obedience! Things were to be done according to the plan of the Holy One of Yisra'el! It would take His loving provision to restore the fellowship which was lost as a result of the grievous sin of wanting to go back to Egypt time and time again, or wanting to follow foreign gods. A Hebrew living in the Tabernacle and Temple period of the Tanakh could only approach the Holy One according to the instructions of the Torah! For only Yehovah could repair the breach! This same Yehovah was the One who would fight their battles as they approached the borders of The Land, and even when they crossed over into it! The enemies were simply too strong for Isra'el by themselves and Yehovah wanted them to internalize this truth!

Chukat ~ חֻקֵּי ~ Statute/Regulation

B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 3:9-21; 4:3-30; 12:27-50

Yochanan/John 3:9-21 The most direct parallel to our Torah portion comes in **verses 14-15**. Just as the *children of Israel/B'nei Yisra'el* were saved from the plague of serpents when they gazed on the brass serpent raised up by Moshe in **B'midbar/Numbers 21:6-9**, so will

all people be saved from eternal death, torment and separation from Yehovah by gazing with spiritual eyes on Messiah Yeshua, who was lifted up on the execution stake.

Yochanan/John 4:3-30 Concerns the woman at the well. Back in the mid-eighties, I heard a teacher share, concerning this particular parable, perhaps this woman was not of ill repute or the leaders would not have listened to her. At the time, I thought this to be an interesting and viable concept. Since turning to my Hebraic roots, I believe even more, this woman was one of good conduct. As we have learned, in Biblical times, it was a Hebrew tradition, if a woman was married and her husband died or was killed and they had no children, then his brother was to marry her. I believe it is conceivable, concerning **verse 18**, she had survived all of her previous husbands and she may well have been a caretaker of the person in whose home she is now living.

As I was looking into various commentaries concerning this parable, I came across something interesting about **verse 26**. According to David Stern's commentary, the phrase "I, the one speaking to you, am he", literally is "I am, the one speaking to you." The rest of Stern's commentary says, "Thus he answers everyone who questions whether Yeshua proclaimed his own Messiahship. The declaration, "I am", echoes Yehovah's self-revelation, "I am who I am" (**Sh'mot/Exodus 3:14**). Yeshua says "I am" nine times in *Yochanan's/John's* Gospel (here in **4:26**; and also in . . .

- *Yochanan/John* 6:20
- *Yochanan/John* 8:24
- *Yochanan/John* 8:28
- *Yochanan/John* 8:58
- *Yochanan/John* 13:9
- *Yochanan/John* 18:5
- *Yochanan/John* 18:6
- *Yochanan/John* 18:8

Again, concerning **verses 28 & 29**, if this woman was of ill repute, these people would not have given ear to her and would not have gone out to see the Messiah.

Returning to our Torah portion, the parallel can be found in **verses 7-14** where Yeshua is talking about "living water". This is exactly what He was and is. He had been the "living water" in our Torah portion, giving life sustaining water to the *Children of Israel/B'nei Yisra'el* as they journeyed through their wilderness experience. And He is the "living water" for those who thirst after the Holy One of Israel.

Yochanan/John 12:27-50 The most direct parallel to our Torah portion in these verses comes in **verses 32-33** when Yeshua says "As for me, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself. He said this to indicate what kind of death he would die". As above, in **Yochanan/John 3:14-15**, we are saved from spiritual death when we look upon Yeshua Ha Mashiach. Just as the *children of Israel/B'nei Yisra'el* were saved from the plague of serpents when they gazed on the brass serpent raised up by Moshe in **B'midbar/Numbers 21:6-9**.

The designated Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 95

Next week's lesson: Parashah #40

Balak ~ בלק ~ Destroyer, Devastator

Torah: B'midbar/Numbers 22:2~25:9

Haftarah: Mikhah/Micah 5:6~6:8

B'rit Hadashah: Kefa Bet/2nd Peter 2:1-22;

Y'hudah/Jude 11; Revelation 2:14-15

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim

The giving of Torah happened at one specific time, but the receiving of Torah happens all the time, in every generation.

Meir Alter, the Gerer Rebbe

Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah, since it can best be acquired in association with others.

Talmud: Berkot 63b

Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!