



Taking Messiah Yeshua and Torah to the World!

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**Message 6-19-10**  
**Chukkat-Ordinance of**  
**Numbers 19:1-22:1**  
**Judges 11:1-33**  
**Acts 5:1-11**

**Introduction**

This week's Parashah deals with the ritual slaughter of a red heifer (parah adumah), which opens this week's portion. This law, abandoned with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, is probably the most impenetrable commandment in the entire Torah; a seemingly illogical concept that ashes can both purify the impure yet make the pure impure. Neither its reason nor origin has ever been clearly understood, causing all scholars to simply return to its Torah source, "I have decreed it, and you do not have permission to question it."

**Numbers 19:1-10**

**1** Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, **2** "This is the statute of the Torah that the LORD has commanded: Tell the people of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and on which a yoke has never come. **3** And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered before him. **4** And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. **5** And the heifer shall be burned in his sight. Its skin, its flesh, and its blood, with its dung, shall be burned. **6** And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet yarn, and throw them into the fire burning the heifer. **7** Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. But the priest shall be unclean until evening. **8** The one who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water and shall be unclean until evening. **9** And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place. And they shall be kept for the water for impurity for the congregation of the people of Israel; it is a sin offering. **10** And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. And this shall be a perpetual statute for the people of Israel, and for the sojourner who sojourns among them. (Num 19:1 ESV)

*From the Jewish Study Bible: The Rabbis derive justification for this seemingly peculiar rite, over which the nations of the world taunt Israel, by this reference to law, "Torah." A red cow: Red, symbolic of blood, ensures the efficacy of the rite. The ashes of a cow rather than a bull are used for individuals (Deu. 21:1-9); the bull "hata't" is used for the high priest and the community (Lev. 4:1-21; 16:11). Generations have puzzled over the color of this cow. The best explanation is that it is brown, or reddish-brown cow, with no spots of other color on it. The priests who oversees*

*the incineration of the cow, and the persons who conduct the various tasks associated with it, become unclean. It is for cleansing: The translation of "hata't" reflects the fact that this is not a sacrifice in the true sense of a sin-offering which is made on the altar inside the camp.*

*Efficacy: Producing or capable of producing a desired effect.*

**Sacrifice**, The offering up of sacrifices is to be regarded as a divine institution. It did not originate with man. God himself appointed it as the mode in which acceptable worship was to be offered to him by guilty man. The language and the idea of sacrifice pervade the whole Bible. Sacrifices were offered in the ante-diluvian age. The Lord clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of animals, which in all probability had been offered in sacrifice Ge 3:21 Abel offered a sacrifice "of the firstlings of his flock" Ge 4:4 Heb 11:4 A distinction also was made between clean and unclean animals, which there is every reason to believe had reference to the offering up of sacrifices Ge 7:2,8 because animals were not given to man as food till after the Flood. The same practice is continued down through the patriarchal age Ge 8:20 12:7 13:4,18 15:9-11 22:1-18 etc.). In the Mosaic period of Old Testament history definite laws were prescribed by God regarding the different kinds of sacrifices that were to be offered and the manner in which the offering was to be made. The offering of stated sacrifices became indeed a prominent and distinctive feature of the whole period Ex 12:3-27 Le 23:5-8 Nu 9:2-14 See ALTAR We learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews that sacrifices had in themselves no value or efficacy. They were only the "shadow of good things to come," and pointed the worshippers forward to the coming of the great High Priest, who, in the fullness of the time, "was offered once for all to bear the sin of many." Sacrifices belonged to a temporary economy, to a system of types and emblems which served their purposes and have now passed away. The "one sacrifice for sins" hath "perfected forever them that are sanctified." Sacrifices were of two kinds: 1. Un-bloody, such as (1 first-fruits and tithes; 2 meat and drink-offerings; and 3 incense. 2. Bloody, such as (1 burnt-offerings; 2 peace-offerings; and 3 sin and trespass offerings. (From Easton's Bible Dictionary)

The ashes of the red heifer have always puzzled not just Biblical scholars but man in general. The ashes are not a sacrifice where the red heifer is offered as a sacrifice but it is the ashes of the red heifer that are used in a ceremony to cleanse the congregation of the people of Israel as a sin offering. It would seem that besides the various sin offerings God required from His people we now have another ceremony performed by a priest on behalf of the people. Red would symbolize the color of blood through which the sins of the people could receive a temporary covering. We know that the sacrifice of animals was not the solution to the issue of sin but only a temporary covering for the problem. It would appear that the red heifer was another symbolic reference to the problem of sin and just how seriously God takes sin. It was sin that interfered in our relationship with God and caused man to be cast out of the Garden with God making the first sacrifice for sin and acting as our High Priest. It is entirely possible and probably that it was Yeshua who offered the animals from whose skins Adam and Chava had their nakedness covered, the nakedness that represents sin being out in the open and that it would take a sacrifice to cover the sin of man.

Yeshua walked in the cool of the day with man in the Garden and had a face to face relationship with man before the fall. After the fall God removed man from the Garden and man was separated from His Creator in a way that showed him that God would not permit a face to face relationship with His creation while sin existed hence the need for a system that would somehow restore on a temporary basis man's relationship with His Creator though now limited and one that would require an intermediary until the day sin is put away for good.

**Romans 8:2** For the Torah of the Spirit of life has set you free in Messiah Yeshua from the Torah of sin and death. (Rom 8:2 ESV)

The Spirit of life was there when God breathed life into the nostrils and man and brought him to life. He was nothing more than a lump of dirt that God formed into a man and gave life to. This should not be lost on us either, the fact that God took dirt and gave it life, life as a man. Adam was created in the image of God while Chava was brought forth from the side of man. Life after that was brought forth through the union of man and woman.

**Genesis 2:7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Gen 2:7 ESV)

**05397** נִשְׁמָה *neshamah* {nesh-aw-maw'}

**Meaning:** breath, spirit, breath (of God), breath (of man), every breathing thing, spirit (of man)

<**05315**> נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh* (659b)

**Meaning:** a soul, living being, life, self, person, desire, passion, appetite, emotion

*Neshamah* is the Hebrew word for breath, as in *breath* of life, and *nephesh* is the Hebrew for *soul* or in this translation creature. Man receives the breath of life from God and becomes a living being as His Creator is a living Being. God is life and shares that life with all living creatures so perhaps the red heifer is another picture of this life that God provides through the death of the heifer and its consumption in fire outside the camp where its ashes are stored until needed to help cleanse the people of Israel? Yeshua was taken outside the *camp* or beyond the walls of Jerusalem where He offered up Himself on the tree on our behalf and His body was placed in a tomb outside the *camp* until His resurrection and the need for Him to come into the camp where He revealed Himself to His disciples so their faith would be restored, life being given to them, who had lost all faith in the power of God. Though Yeshua was not consumed in fire as the red heifer had been He gave Himself completely to us by pouring out His lifeblood and giving up His Spirit that we could be cleansed.

Every aspect of the sacrificial system points to Yeshua and what He did for us. While not all sacrifices and offerings were about sin the sacrificial system was about restoring our relationship with our Creator and how He was going to do this through Yeshua our Creator. The struggle of mankind with the place of Yeshua in all of this and His place as the Son of God is confusing to many people who attempt to latch onto the idea of the one God of Israel while the truth of Yeshua and the nature of God has been revealed to us through the sacrificial system. As intricate as the system became it was all about God showing us there was a better way.

### **Judges 11:29-31**

**29** Then the Spirit of the LORD was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. **30** And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, **31** then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." (Jdg 11:29 ESV)

*From the Jewish Study Bible: The formulation of the oath, referring to one coming out of the door of his house, suggests a human rather than an animal sacrifice. The brief account of the war is incorporated within the account of the vow, depicted in detail and in a way that emphasizes the tragedy of this fateful, irreversible error. Biblical literature struggles with the norm of offering human sacrifices, which was apparently practiced throughout the First temple period (2 Kings 21:6; 23:10; Jer. 7:31; etc.) Hence, this incident shows Jephthah in a negative light.*

Jephthah is a contradiction between having the Spirit of the Lord and making a vow that would cause him to offer up his daughter as a burnt offering. This is the dilemma that many of us fall into when we fail to grasp an understanding of the Torah and the concepts God shares with us so we can see Him. Jephthah, obviously, was not totally in synch with the Lord because of the fact he made a vow like this and lacked the proper understanding of a relationship with God that should make us stop and consider our next step before we do something we will regret. This applies especially to sin. How many of us really take the time to think about the things we do that go against what God teaches us in the Torah and that will affect our relationship with Him through His Son Yeshua? We pray in the name of Yeshua but we have lost sight of what this actually means. We pray without thinking through our prayers. In our congregation we base part of our service on the liturgy found in a Siddur parts of which have been adapted to our faith in Yeshua and our Messianic walk. I always stress to our congregation that the liturgy is not a replacement for our own prayer to God but is an aid to it and that the liturgy shows us the Jewish belief in a Messianic based faith.

While parts of traditional Judaism reject Yeshua as Messiah they are looking for a Messiah. There are parts of traditional Judaism that reject the concept or idea of a Messiah completely but this is not the Biblical norm or the Orthodox way. The prayers found in the liturgy uphold this Messianic faith through prayers for the resurrection of the dead, the coming of the Messiah and much more. It provides a connection to our heritage and our place in Israel as Believers in Messiah Yeshua. We need to learn to look to Judah for guidance in matters related to Torah rather than throwing the Torah out the window along with all things Jewish. Many people, professing faith in Messiah and a love for the Jewish people, look to the Internet and to television shows that will bring them the deep, spiritual insights they are seeking rather than looking for the literal truth that is revealed in the pages of the Bible.

Our revelation of the word is found in the Apostolic Scriptures in the teaching about Yeshua and what He taught. He opened up the way to understand the Torah as God meant it to be and how to apply it to our lives as Believers no matter what generation we live in. It applied to Adam and Chava and it applies to us today but the one thing we **must** remember is the Torah does not save us – it shows us the way to Yeshua and that salvation is found only in Him and not in the Torah. The Torah provides the means as to how we are to structure and live our lives as Messiah centered – Torah observing people of God.

### **Acts 5:1-11**

**1** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, **2** and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

**5** When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. **6** The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. **7** After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." **9** But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." **10** Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. **11** And great fear came upon the whole congregation and upon all who heard of these things. (Act 5:1 ESV)

The intent of this week's Torah, Haftarah, and Apostolic Scripture is the seriousness of sin and how our actions are not limited just to us but affect those around us in ways we may not be aware of. There are times I am not aware of how my words or actions affect other people unless someone tells me. There are times I am amazed as to how things I have said have affected people inside and outside of our congregation. I was raised in a family that used their words to level the *"playing field"* rather than their fists. My father was a quiet man who focused himself on his business to the detriment of his family. He came from a generation that had been instilled with the idea that the man put a roof over his family's head and food on the table as well as clothes on our backs. My mother did not work outside the home but was very busy taking care of a brood of children numbering five. She made sure we went to school and Hebrew school and received a proper Jewish education. We attended synagogue on the Sabbath and went for the Festival services. My mother had the tongue that we children inherited. It was drummed into us that as Jews we did not fight with our fists but used our tongues to gain the upper hand and to chop down our opponents and grind them into the dust. To this day my sister and I still follow this *"code"* but I have struggled mightily to tame my tongue. I have to admit that at times I have failed to do this and have probably crossed over the line into *lashon hara* or the *evil tongue*. I speak without thinking at times and that is not necessarily a good thing. Some people might say one must be honest in their dealings with others but is it necessary to hurt someone for the sake of winning an argument or discussion?

Jephthah spoke without thinking and committed himself to a vow before God that he could not undo. Some commentators go to great lengths to try to explain that God did not require Jephthah to actually offer his daughter as a burnt offering but the gist of the text indicates otherwise. The point is we need to be careful with our words because we are told the tongue may be one of the smallest parts of the human body but it can cause some of the worst damage.

**James 3:7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (Jam 3:7 ESV)

This is why I believe what the Scripture has to say that our lips might say one thing but there is something else deep within us in our hearts. God looks at the heart my friends not just at the words that come from our lips. Be careful of the vows you bring before the Lord and what you claim to do in His name. There is a day of reckoning coming for all mankind both great and small.

**Revelation 20:11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:11 NKJ)

***My teaching on the Torah at the dinner last night was a smash hit," bragged the notoriously egocentric young rabbi, "I had the audience glued to their seats." "Wonderful, wonderful," said the older rabbi, "Clever of you to think of it."***

May the Lord bless you and yours... *Mordecai Silver*

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