

Torah: B'midbar (Numbers) 19:1 – 25:9
Haftarah: Mikhah (Micah) 5:6-6:8
B'rit Hadashah: Kefa Bet (2 Peter) 1:1-11

	<i>yr. 1 19:1-21:20</i>
1	19:1 – 9
2	19:10 – 17
3	19:18 – 20:6
4	20:7 – 13
5	20:14 – 21
6	20:22 – 21:9
7	21:10 – 20

<p>this statute [is] the Torah which HaShem commanded saying speak to the sons of Israel and let them bring to you a red heifer without defect on which is no physical defect upon her no yolk has been</p>	<p><i>zot khuqat ha'Torah ashér-tzivah ADONÁI le'mor daber el-b'néy Yis'raél ve'yiq'khu eleykha farah adumah t'miyimah ashér eyn-bah mum ashér lo-alah aléyha ol</i></p>	<p>זאת חֻקַת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ פָּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין-בָּהּ מוֹם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עֲלָה עָלֶיהָ עֹל:</p>
---	--	--

Parshah Khuqat gives the “law” regarding the *Parah Adumah*, the "red heifer", an unblemished, completely red cow that is slaughtered and completely burnt. Its ashes are used as part of a ritual for purification after contact with a dead body. Miriam dies, immediately followed by a shortage of water. HaShem orders Moshe to speak to a rock for water, but in anger he strikes it, and for this he and Aharon are not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Aharon’s death is also described. Various conflicts are then experienced by Israel on their wilderness travels with the Emorites, the Canaanites and the Amorites.

Parashah Balak contains the popular story of the pagan prophet Bil’am and his talking donkey. Balak, King of Moav fears the approaching Israelites and seeks Bil’am to put a curse on them. On his way to serve Balak, an angel blocks Bil’am’s way. He does not see it but the donkey does. HaShem tells Balaam not to curse the Israelites, and to say only what HaShem says. The time comes, but instead of cursing Israel, he blessed them. Part of his blessing is a standard Jewish prayer (Ma Tovv). But after this, the parshah ends with the people suffering as many people turn to idolatry with a local god.

The Haftarah portion connects to the Torah portion referring to (6:5) the story of Balak and Balaam.

Year 1 Aliyah Highlights

- Nu. 19:1-9** A perfect, unworked Red Heifer was to be given to El’azar to be slaughtered outside the camp in front of him as a purification offering. He was to sprinkle some of its blood seven times and reduce it to ashes. During 2nd temple times, this ceremony was performed by the High Priest atop the Mount of Olives, where there was a direct view of the entrance to the Temple.
- Nu. 19:10-17** Anyone could perform the sacrifice and process the ashes which are then mixed with water and sprinkled on anyone who has touched a corpse.
- Nu. 19:18-20:6** Details of the “clean” sprinkling the “unclean” and their status. Narrative of the wilderness journey resumes, and it is (likely) the 40th year. Miryam dies and the water supply stops. The people assemble against Moshe and Aharon, who then seek HaShem for direction.
- Nu. 20:7-13** HaShem orders Moshe to assemble the community with Aharon and speak to the rock. But Moshe strikes the rock twice, water flowed. Moshe’s public lack of trust and misrepresenting HaShem disqualifies he and Aharon from leading the new generation of people into the land.
- Nu. 20:14-21** Moshe sends “messengers” to requests passage through Edomite territory. Edom refuses, and Israel turns away. Echos of Ya’aqov and Esav.

6. **Nu. 20:22-21:9** All Israel watches as Moshe, Aharon and Eleazar ascend Mount Hor. Only Moshe and Eleazar return. The entire community mourn Aharon thirty days. The Kena'ani attack, but HaShem hands them over, and Israel completely destroys them. As they travel on, complaints arise again, and HaShem responds by sending poisonous snakes. The people repent, and HaShem has Moshe put a bronze serpent on a pole. When the people are bitten and they look toward it, they live.
7. **Nu. 21:10-20** More of Israel's travels. *The Book of the Wars of Adonai* along with the *Book of Yashar* (Jos. 10:13, 2Sa. 1:18) were anthologies of songs describing Israel's battles in more detail.

Thought Focus

The reality of death: Law informs the narrative, and narrative explains the law. The law of the Red Heifer highlights the uncleanness caused by the reality of death, and provides comfort for both the loss of a generation in the wilderness, and three great sibling leaders. It is given as a "statute of the Torah" (*khuqat ha torah* – חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה), a phrase only used here and in Nu. 31:21, highlighting its central importance.

Snakes: What if HaShem "sent" the snakes simply by removing his protection from what naturally existed in the wilderness?

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

- (19:2) How do you respond to those who oppose and question God's clear instructions? (Gen 3:1, Job 1:9-10, Mat 4:3,6, Mat 16:13-18, 2Co 10:5, 1Pe 5:9)
- (19:18) Is there purity in your life? Is it important to you? How do you get "pure"? (Psa 24:3-4, Psa 51:12, Mar 7:21, Luk 11:37-41, Isa 29:13-16)
- (20:14) Do you still deal with issues from your past? (Gen 32:4, Pro 15:1, Mat 5:25, Rom 12:18, Isa 55:6-7, Job 22:21-22, Heb 12:14)
- (20:22) Is your journey difficult? Do you know God's care for you in the details? Have you "arrived?" (Deu 4:4, Mat 10:29, 2Ti 1:12, Psa 143:6-11, Luk 21:10-19)
- (20:24) What are your thoughts about life after death for yourself? For those you love? For all the world? (Gen 25:8, Isa 65:17, Eze 37:12, Dan 12:2, Mar 12:26-27, Mat 25:21, 1Co 15:19-20, Joh 6:40, Rom 4:16-17, Heb 11:13-16)
- (22:2) What does the enemy see in your past history? What does God see? What do you see? (Num 21:1-3, 21-32, 33-35, Eph 6:12, Mat 5:14, Jam 4:7, Heb 12:1-3, 1Pe 5:6-9)
- (22:13) How do you share what God speaks to you? What is your motivation? (Gen 22:3, Jos 8:14, Hos 6:4, 1Ki 22:11-23, Mat 5:37, 12:37, Eph 4:15, 2Th 2:11-12)

8. (22:39) How are you influenced by the company you keep? Do you point fingers or take responsibility for your actions? (1Sa 15:14-20, Pro 28:13, 1Jo 1:8, Exo 32:21-24, 2Sa 12:7-14, Luk 15:21-24)
9. (23:13) Do you experience temptation in the same three-fold pattern used by Balak to curse Israel? (Num 23:9, 19, 21, 23, 24:5-7, Mat 4:5, 8, Mat 26:69, 71, luk 22:59, 1Co 10:13, Eph 6:13, 2Co 11:1-4, Eph 6:10-18)
10. (24:14) What excites you about “the Last Days?” Has the “morning star” arisen in your heart? (Gen 49:10, Num 24:17, Isa 14:26, Mat 2:2, 2Ti 3:1, Rev 22:16, 2Pe 1:19, Zec 14:4, 9:10, Mic 4:2, Hos 3:4-5, Rev 11:15-17)