

Numbers 19:1-22:1

Chukat | חקת

“Decree of”

Parshat Chukat is a fascinating portion, needless to say. A few of the bigger things going on are:

(1) God provides the treatment before the disease—in this case the purification process of the red heifer before the deaths of Miriam, Aaron and the generation that is not to enter the Promised Land.

(2) Moses demonstrates his limited capacity to lead the people in the Land through his frustration and why someone else must take his place.

And (3) Israel, once again, asks “why?” before being faced with Sichon in battle (which represents the necessary confrontation with their own human reason).

Additional Resources:

BT: *Chukat* 2021

BT: *Chukat* 2010

Aleph-Beta: *Chukat*



Community Questions:

1. What evidence of Israel's spiritual growth do you see in this portion?
2. Since the name “Moses” becomes synonymous with “Torah” by the time of the Apostolic Scriptures (see Acts 15:21, for example), in what sense can the Torah on its own not bring us into the Land of Promise (Hint: consider the name of the leader who takes over after Moses)?

3. What are some other *chukkim* (statutes whose reasons have not been revealed) do you know of—or can you find—in the Torah?
4. Where else is the phrase “this is the decree of the Torah” used, and what kind of decree is it?

5. The red heifer is described as being *tamim*, usually translated as “without spot”, “pure” or “flawless”. It is a spotless young female cow that has not borne a calf, covered in red—i.e., both entirely pure and entirely sinful. It is the ashes of this particular offering that are used to cleanse from that which makes one most impure—coming into contact with a dead human body. Review the laws of the red heifer. How is the red heifer symbolic of Yeshua?
6. How is the decree of the red heifer “the decree of the Torah”? In other words, why isn't it just a decree of purification?

7. Parents, considering Moses' seeming failure to change his attitude toward the nation of Israel over time, what advice do you have for the difficult process of recognizing when a child has matured and slowly adapting how you relate to the child?
8. What are some of the *chukkim* in your life you have a hard time doing because you do not understand why?