



*before taking the off-ramp,
let's take a moment to review*

The SPECIAL SHABBATOT of the YEAR

...calling for special thematic additional Torah and/or *Haftarah* reading

occasion	special Torah	special <i>Haftarah</i>
Shabbat <i>Rosh Chodesh</i>	Numbers 28:9-15	Isaiah 66:1-24
Shabbat day before <i>Rosh Chodesh</i>	-----	I Samuel 20:18-42
Shabbat during 10 days of Repentance	-----	Hosea 14:2-10, Micah 7:18-20, Joel 2:15-27
Shabbat during Sukkot	Exodus 33:12-34:26	Ezekiel 38:18-39:16
Shabbat #1 in Chanukah	appropriate day from Numbers 7	Zechariah 2:14-4:7
Shabbat #2 in Chanukah	appropriate day from Numbers 7	I Kings 7:40-50
<i>Sh'qalim</i> (announcing Adar)	Exodus 30:11-16	II Kings 12:1-17
<i>Zachor</i> (before Purim)	Deut. 25:17-19	I Samuel 15:2-34
<i>Parah</i> (before announcing Nissan)	Numbers 19:1-22	Ezekiel 36:16-38
<i>haChodesh</i> (announcing Nissan)	Exodus 12:1-20	Ezekiel 45:16-46:18
<i>haGadol</i> (before Passover)	-----	Malachi 3:4-24
Shabbat during Passover	Exodus 33:12-34:26	Ezekiel 37:1-14



OFF-RAMP TORAH

A JUDICIOUS DEPARTURE FROM
THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION

- March 30, 2024 -



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

TO START: Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: Tzav-Parah Leviticus 6:1-8:36 / Numbers 19:1-22

Sequence in Torah cycle: 25th of 54

Sequence in Leviticus: 2nd of 10

WHERE WE'RE GOING INSTEAD, and why

“Torah Out Of Season”: Numbers 19:1-22

Context: Numbers, fourth of the Five Books of the Torah, is named for the census of the Israelites that constitutes its opening chapter. Its episodic narratives describe our forebears' 39-year journey from Mount Sinai to the frontier of the Promised Land.

Content: This passage, reprised from the eponymous Parashah "Chuqqat" read in mid-Summer, details a purification ritual involving the burnt ashes of a red cow.

For reasons we will explore together, this passage is read as a supplement to the regular weekly Torah portion on *the Shabbat before we announce the New Moon of Nissan* to inaugurate the preparatory season leading up to Passover.

19:1] - The Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: [19:2] - **“This is the chuqqah of the Torah** The Eternal One has commanded, declaring:

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אַהֲרֹן
לֵאמֹר זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוֶּה
יְהוָה לֵאמֹר

אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וְהַתּוֹרֹת

A) Leviticus 25:45 - Those are the **chuqqim** and the **mishpatim** and the **torahs** אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה בֵּינוּ וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהַר סִינַי בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה that The Eternal One has established between Himself and the Israelites at Mount Sinai by means of Moses.

הַתּוֹרֹת
torah

י-ר-ה “aim; direct”
teaching; law; doctrine;
rule; protocol to follow

הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים
mishpat

ש-פ-ט “judge”
judgement; law;
ruling; statute



הַחֻקִּים
chuqqah
ח-ק-ק “legislate”
a decree

- more over

ארבעה דברים יצר הרע משיב עליהן דכתיב בהן חקה

B) Midrash Numbers Rabbah 19:5 - There are four contradictory legislations that impel our doubt and our questioning, **each of which the Torah refers to as a “*chuqqah*”**:

אשת אח

i) the sexual accessibility of a brother’s widow [= levirate marriage instituted in Deuteronomy 25:5, which on the surface contradicts the ban against adultery in Leviticus 18:16];

וכלאים

ii) mixed-fiber linen and wool [which is forbidden in Deuteronomy 22:11, but required for the accessories of the *Mishkan* and the *efode* of the High Priest];

ושעיר המשתלח

iii) the scapegoat [which is released on Yom Kippur in accordance with Leviticus 16:26 to implement the atonement of the community, yet which renders ritually unclean the one who escorted it out of the encampment];

ופרה אדומה

iv) and **the red cow** [of **Numbers 19**, an agent of purification which paradoxically renders ritually unclean everyone involved in offering it]—

וכתיב בה חקה זאת חקת התורה

regarding each of which the term “*chuqqah*” is written: **“this is the *chuqqah* [=un unquestioned decree] of the Torah.”**

זאת חקת התורה - לפי שהשטן ואומות העולם מונין את ישראל לומר מה המצוה הזאת ומה טעם יש בה

C) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Numbers 19:2 - “This is the *chuqqah* of the Torah” - inasmuch as detractors and other nations oppress Israel, demanding: “What is this strange rule, and what rationale could there be behind it?”

לפיכך כתב בה חקה

accordingly, this Torah text is specifically written using the word *chuqqah* “an unquestioned royal decree,” [to convey God’s proclaiming]:

גזרה היא מלפני אין לך רשות להרהר אחריה

“**This is an edict issued from Myself**, which you have no authority to call into question!”

19:2] - “Instruct the Israelite people that they **דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלַיךְ פָּרָה אֲדֹמָה**,
are to bring you **a red cow**,

שאם היו בה שתי שערות שחורות

D) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Numbers 19:2 - “**A red cow**” - so that if there are as few as **only two black** [or other non-red] **hairs** in it,

פסולה

that invalidates it for use in this ceremony.

Breeds of inherently— and exclusively, or at least predominantly— red cattle:

Barzona [Arizona]	Limousin [France]	Red Poll [England]
Devon [England]	Lincoln Red [England]	Red Saler [France]
Gelbieh [Germany]	Norwegian Red	South Devon [England]
Hereford [England]	Red Angus [Scotland]	Scottish Highland



Herd of polychrome cattle

Egyptian tomb painting, Luxor
1380 BCE

פָּרָה “cow”

► Egyptian mother-goddess Hat-Hor (“Shrine of [the sky-god] Horus”; “Eye of [the sun-god] Re”; “Mistress of The West [i.e. realm of the dead]”; and “Great One of Many Names”)— generally depicted as a **cow**, to acknowledge her role in the fertility and bounties of the land.



◀ Pharaoh’s dream (Genesis 41), with scrawny **cows** symbolically representing the impending failure of Egypt’s food productivity.

משל לבן שפחה שטנף פלטין של מלך אמרו
תבא אמו ותקנח הצואה

E) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Numbers 19:2 - A parable: the child of a maidservant defiled the royal palace. The courtiers declared: “Let his own mother come and clean up the excrement.”

כך תבא פרה ותכפר על העגל

In just such a way, let **the** [red] **cow** come make expiation for the [sin of the Golden] Calf.

“**intact**, in which there is no **defect**

תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין בָּהּ מוֹם

וְאִישׁ כִּי יִקְרִיב זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְפִלֵּא נֶדֶר אוֹ לְנִדְבָה בַּבֶּקֶר אוֹ בַצֹּאן תְּמִיִּם יִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן

F) Leviticus 22:21-22 - Any individual who offers up a celebration-offering to The Eternal— whether from the flock or the herd, in fulfillment of a vow or as a pledge-gift— **it must be intact to be accepted in his favor.**

כָּל מוֹם לֹא יִהְיֶה בּוֹ עֹנֶרֶת אוֹ שְׁבוּר אוֹ חָרוּץ אוֹ יִבֶּלֶת אוֹ גָּרֵב אוֹ יִלְפֶּת

There may not be any defect in it; blind, or injured, or maimed, or with a scab, boil-scar, or withered—

לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ אֵלָה לַיהוָה וְאִשָּׁה לֹא תִתְּנוּ מֵהֶם עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה

such as these you may not present to The Eternal One, nor make a fire-offering of such on God’s Own Altar.

וְכִי תִגָּשׁוּן עֹנֶר לְזִבַח אֵין רָע וְכִי תִגִּישׁוּ פֶסֶח וְחִלָּה אֵין רָע

G) Malachi 1:8 - “For when you present a blind sacrifice, is there nothing wrong with that? And when you present a crippled or sick one, is there nothing wrong with that?
 הַקְרִיבֵהוּ נָא לְפָחֶתֶדְ הַיְרֻצֵד אוֹ הַיִּשָּׂא פְּנֵיךָ אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 “Go ahead and offer it as a gift to your governor; will he be pleased with it, or will he be inclined to show you favor?” asks The Eternal One of hosts.

“on which **no yoke** has been laid. אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָלָה עָלֶיהָ עַל

<p>עול - “yoke” (I Kings 19:21 - Elisha roasts his oxen)</p>	<p>עוֹל - “iniquity; injustice; corruption”</p>
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לא עלה עליה **עול** - כשם שפרקו מעליהם **עול שמים**

H) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Numbers 19:22 - “No **yoke** has been laid upon it” – even as **they had divested themselves of the Yoke of Heaven** [by worshipping the Golden Calf].

למה נסמכה מיתת מרים לפרשת פרה אדומה

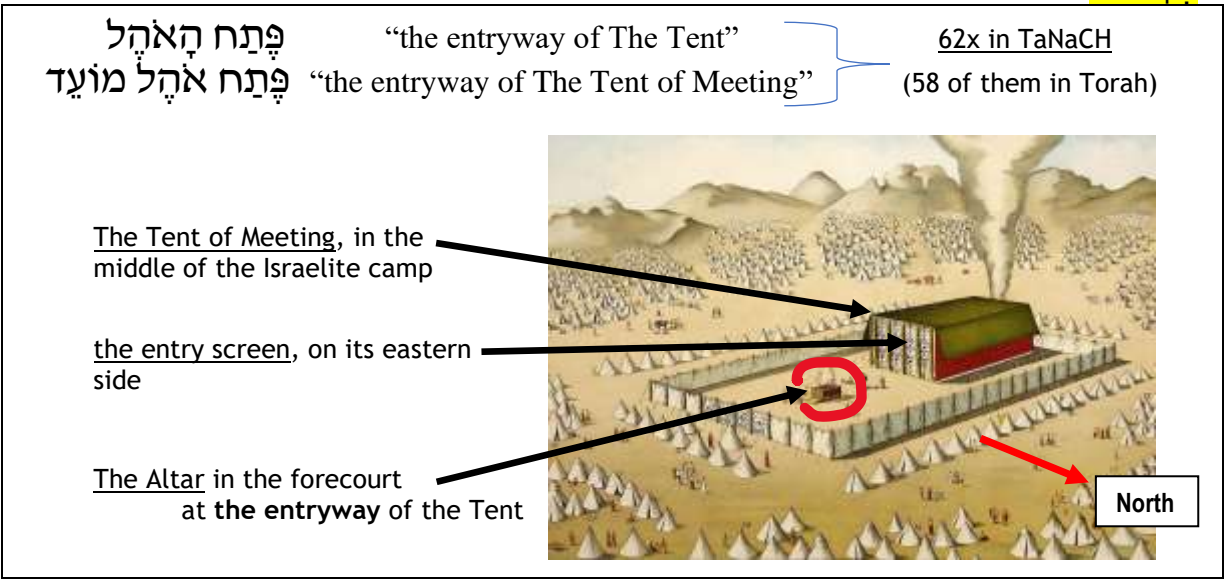
I) Babylonian Talmud, Mo’ed Katan 28a - Why is the narrative about the death of Miriam [in Numbers 20] juxtaposed to the legislation of the red cow [in chapter 19]?

לומר לך מה **פרה אדומה** מכפרת אף מיתתן של צדיקים מכפרת

To tell you that **just as the red cow** makes expiation, so too do the deaths of the righteous **make expiation**.

19:3] - You shall give it to El’Azar the priest, who is to take it **outside the camp** and have it slaughtered in his presence. [19:4] - Then El’Azar the priest is to take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle it toward **the front of the Tent of Meeting seven times**.

וַיִּתְּנֶם אֶתְּהָ אֶל אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן
 וְהוֹצִיא אֶתְּהָ אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה
 וְשַׁחַט אֶתְּהָ לְפָנָיו וְלָקַח אֶלְעָזָר
 הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּמָהּ בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ וְהִזָּה אֶל
 נֹכַח פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד מִדָּמָהּ **שֶׁבַע**
פְּעָמִים



19:5] - He is to witness the cow being burned— its hide; its flesh; and its blood, together with its dung— [19:6] - while the priest is to take **cedar wood, hyssop,** and [wool dyed] **worm-crimson** to throw into the fire consuming the cow.

וְשָׂרַף אֶת הַפָּרָה לְעֵינָיו אֶת עֹרָהּ
וְאֶת בְּשָׂרָהּ וְאֶת דָּמָהּ עַל פְּרִשָּׁה
וְשָׂרַף וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן עֵץ אֲרֶז וְאַזְבִּיב
וְשָׂנִי תוֹלַעַת וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֶל תוֹךְ
שִׂרְפַת הַפָּרָה

Cedar *Cedrus libani* אֲרֶז מְלִבְנוֹן

- Babylon, 3000 BCE – Gilgamesh *eren giš tir* “the cedar-wood forest.”
- Phoenicia, 1300 BCE – cedars for ship-building sacred to Yamm, god of the sea.
- Jerusalem, 960 BCE – Solomon builds the Jerusalem Temple of hewn cedar.
- India c. 350 BCE – *Mahabharata* describes cedar tree as hermitage of the sages.
- Native American – cedar as incense, and agent of spiritual purification.
- neo-pagans – cedar fragrance “pleasing to all mountain gods.”

Hyssop *Hyssopus officinalis* אֲזֹב

- used as an *aspergillum* (ceremonial sprinkler of sacred fluids)
- 1280 BCE – blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt.
- 33 CE – *spongiam plenam aceto, hyssopo circumponentes* (John 19:29).
- 1270 – aspersion of holy water in Spanish churches;
– magic rituals to converse with the dead.
- today – aspersion of holy water in Catholic and Anglican churches;
– Wiccan purification rituals.

תַּחֲטֵאֵנִי בְּאַזְבִּיב וְאַטְהֵר תִּכְבֹּסֵנִי וּמִשָּׁלֵג אֶלְבִּין

J) Psalm 51:9 - **Purge me of sin with hyssop, that I may be pure;**
wash me clean, that I may be made whiter than snow.

וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח לְמִטְהָר שְׁתֵּי-צִפְּרִים חַיּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת וְעֵץ אֲרֶז וְשָׂנִי תוֹלַעַת
וְאַזְבִּיב

K) Leviticus 14:4 - Let the officiating priest order there to be brought, **for the sake of the one being purified** [of *tzora'at*] two live kosher birds; some cedar wood; [a strand of wool dyed in] **worm-crimson;** and **hyssop**.

worm-crimson שָׂנִי תוֹלַעַת

extract from egg cases of the shield louse *Kermes nahalali* and *Kermes greeni*

L) Isaiah 1:18 -

אִם-יְהִיוּ חַטָּאֵיכֶם כַּשָּׁנִים כַּשָּׁלֵג יִלְבִּינוּ
Though your sins be as **crimson**, they will be as white as snow;
אִם-יֵאָדִימוּ כַּתוֹלַעַת כַּצֹּמֶר יִהְיוּ
Be they **red as worm[-dye]**, [white as] wool shall they become.

19:7] - “The priest is to **launder** his garments, and bathe his body in water, after which the priest may re-enter the camp— but **he remains impure until evening**. [19:8] - The one who performed the burning shall also **launder** his garments in water and bathe in water; and **he remains impure until evening**.

וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו הַכֹּהֵן וְרָחַץ בְּשָׂרוֹ
 בְּמַיִם וְאַחֲרַיִם יָבֹא אֶל הַמִּחֲנֶה וְטָמֵא
 הַכֹּהֵן עַד הָעֶרֶב וְהִשְׂרִיף אֹתָהּ
 וְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו בְּמַיִם וְרָחַץ בְּשָׂרוֹ
 בְּמַיִם וְטָמֵא עַד הָעֶרֶב

נֶפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּגַע בּוֹ וְטָמְאָה עַד הָעֶרֶב
 M) Leviticus 22:6-7 - Any individual who has touched any such source of ritual impurity **remains impure until evening**.
 וְלֹא יֹאכַל מִן הַקֹּדְשִׁים כִּי אִם רָחַץ בְּשָׂרוֹ בְּמַיִם
 Such a one may not eat of any sacred offerings until he has bathed his flesh in water;
וְבָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְטָהַר וְאַחֲרַיִם יֹאכַל מִן הַקֹּדְשִׁים
then, once the sun has set, he is pure, and afterwards may eat of the sacred offerings.

19:9] - “Another person, who is pure, is to gather up the ashes of the cow and deposit them outside the camp in a pure place, **to be kept** for the Israelite community as **lustration water** [for purgation]. [19:10a] - The one who gathers up the ashes of the cow shall **launder** his clothes and be impure **until evening**.

וְאִסַּף אִישׁ טָהוֹר אֶת אֵפֶר הַפָּרָה
 וְהֵנִיחַ מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה בְּמָקוֹם טָהוֹר
 וְהִיְתָה לְעֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת
 לְמַי נְדָה חֲטָאֹת הוּא וְכַבֵּס הָאִסַּף
 אֶת אֵפֶר הַפָּרָה אֶת בְּגָדָיו וְטָמֵא עַד
 הָעֶרֶב

מִי	construct of מַיִם “water”	- “water[s] of...”
נְדָה	noun from נ-ד-ה “put aside, banish”	- “impurity”
חֲטָאֹת	noun from ח-ט-א “sin, transgress”	- “a sin-offering” Leviticus 4 - 6
=====		
Septuagint (c. 150 BCE)	ὕδωρ ῥαντισμοῦ ἁγνισμῶν	“a sprinkling-water, for purification”
Jerome - Vulgate (405)	aquam aspersionis pro peccato vacca combusta est	“a sprinkling water, because the cow is burnt for sin ”
John Wycliffe (1383)	watir of spryngyng; for the cow is brent for synne	
William Tyndale (1530), Geneva (1550)	sprynklynge water, for it is a synofferynge	
Jewish Publication Society (1917)	a water of sprinkling; it is a purification from sin	
Aryeh Kaplan (1981)	sprinkling water as a means for purification	
=====		
King James Bible (1611)	a water of separation ; it is a cleansing for sin	
Everett Fox (1995)	as Waters-Kept-Apart , it is for decontamination	
=====		
Martin Luther (1530)	Reinigungswasser ; es ist ein Sündopfer	“a cleansing water; it is a sin-offering ”
Jean-Frédéric Osterwald (1744)	l'eau de purification , purification pour le péché	
Robert Alter (2004)	riddance-water; it is an offense-offering	

19:10b] - “This shall be an enduring *chuqqah* for the Israelites and for the strangers who reside among them: [19:11] - any person making contact with the remains of any human being shall be ritually impure for [the] seven days.

וְהִיְתָה לְבִנְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִגְרֵי הָאֶרֶץ
בְּתוֹכָם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם הַנִּגְעַת בְּמַת
לְכָל נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וְטִמְאָ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים

שִׁבְעַת יָמִים = construct state of שִׁבְעָה “seven”

- Genesis 7:10 - Flood begins **seven days** after the Ark is closed.
- Genesis 31:23 - Lavan overtakes Jacob after a **seven-day** pursuit.
- Exodus 22:29 - first-born livestock remains under its mother **seven days** before dedication.
- Leviticus 8:35 - Aaronides keep dedication vigil in the shrine **seven days**, lest they die.

- Exodus 7:25 - Pharaoh is given a second warning **seven days** after the Nile is struck.
- Exodus 12:15 - Israelites instructed to eat *matzah* **seven days** to memorialize the first-born.

- Genesis 50:10 - Joseph and his family mourn Jacob’s burial **seven days**.
- I Samuel 31:13 - people of Yavesh-Gil’ad mourn King Saul after his burial **seven days**.
- Numbers 31:19 - returning warriors remain in quarantine outside the camp **seven days**.

N) Avraham Yitzhak Sperling (1851-1923), *Ta’amei haMinhagim* #1027 - It is customary to wash the hands upon leaving the cemetery, as a reminder to the living that they should go about their lives **serving God in a pure way**.

Some have the custom to uproot a bit of grass alongside the grave, together with the soil in which it is rooted, and throw it behind them while pronouncing the verse

כָּל-הַבָּשָׂר חֲצִיר וְכָל-חַסְדּוֹ כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה

all flesh is but grass; all its righteousness like the growth of the field [Isaiah 40:6], only after which do they ceremonially wash their hands.

This practice is a **monument to and remembrance of the purifying ashes of the red cow**, which was mixed with water and administered with a sprig of the hyssop plant. **We invoke all three of those elements by using soil, grass, and water in a ritual of ceremonial purification** at the cemetery.

19:12] - “Having purified themselves with the ashes on the third day and on the **seventh day**, they shall be pure; if they fail to purify themselves on the third and **seventh** days, they shall not be pure. [19:13] - Those who touch a corpse, the body of a person who has died, and do not purify themselves, defile The Eternal One’s Tabernacle; those persons shall be cut off from Israel. Since the water of lustration was not dashed on them, they remain impure; their impurity is still upon them.

הוּא יִתְחַטֵּא בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִטְהַר וְאִם לֹא
יִתְחַטֵּא בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי לֹא יִטְהַר כָּל הַנִּגְעַת בְּמַת
בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָמוּת וְלֹא
יִתְחַטֵּא אֶת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה טִמְאָ
וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי
מִי נִדָּה לֹא זָרַק עָלָיו טִמְאָ יְהִי
עוֹד טִמְאָתוֹ בּוֹ

הלכה כתנא דידן דאמר שלשה

O) Babylonian Talmud, Mo'eid Qatan 21a-b - The *halachah* follows the teaching of the Mishnaic sages that [the minimum observance of formal mourning is] **three days**.

תנו רבנן אבל שלשה ימים הראשונים אסור במלאכה ואפילו עני המתפרנס מן הצדקה מכאן ואילך עושה בצינעא בתוך ביתו והאשה טווה בפלך בתוך ביתה

Our Mishnaic sages have taught that **during the first three days** [following the burial] a **mourner is forbidden to do work**— even an indigent being maintained by charity. Thereafter [for the balance of the *shiv'ah* week] he does his work privately, in his house. A woman in mourning may continue to spin, but she plies the spindle within her house.

תנו רבנן אבל שלשה ימים הראשונים אינו הולך לבית האבל מכאן ואילך הולך ואינו יושב במקום המנחמין אלא במקום המתנחמין

Our Mishnaic sages have taught that **during the first three days** [following the burial] a **mourner should not go to a place of mourning** [to offer his condolences to others experiencing a loss]. Thereafter during the *shiv'ah* week he may go— but, once there, is to take his place not among the comforters, but rather among those being consoled.

תנו רבנן אבל שלשה ימים הראשונים אסור בשאילת שלום משלשה ועד שבעה משיב ואינו שואל מכאן ואילך שואל ומשיב כדרכו

Our Mishnaic sages have taught that during the first three days of the *shiv'ah* period a mourner **is forbidden to give the greeting of peace**. Thereafter during the *shiv'ah* week he may respond to the greetings of others, but does not give greeting himself. And thereafter [for the balance of the *sh'loshim* month and the initial year of *aveilut*] he gives greeting of peace and responds in his usual manner.

19:14] - “This is the ritual: When a person dies indoors, whoever enters therein— or who is already therein— **shall be impure seven days**; [19:15] - and every open vessel, with no lid fastened down, shall be impure. [19:16] - And in the open, anyone who touches a person who was killed or who died naturally, or human bone, or a grave, **shall be impure seven days** [19:17] - “Some of the ashes from the fire of purgation shall be taken for the impure person, and fresh water shall be added to them in a vessel. [19:18] - “Another party who is pure shall take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle on the tent and on all the vessels and people who were there, or on the one who touched the bones or the person who was killed or died naturally or the grave. 19:19] - The pure person shall sprinkle it upon the impure person **on the third day and on the seventh day, thus purifying that person on the seventh day**. The one being purified shall launder those clothes and bathe in water, **and as of nightfall shall be pure**.

זאת התורה אדם כי ימות באהל כל הבא אל האהל וכל אשר באהל יטמא **שבעת ימים** וכל כלי פתוח אשר אין צמיד פתיל עליו טמא הוא וכל אשר יגע על פני השדה בחלל חרב או במת או בעצם אדם או בקבר יטמא **שבעת ימים** ולקח אזוב וטבל במים איש טהור ולקחו לטמא מעפר שרפת החטאת ונתן עליו מים חיים אל כלי והזה על האהל ועל כל הכלים ועל הנפשות אשר היו שם ועל הנגע בעצם או בחלל או במת או בקבר והזה הטהר על הטמא **ביום השלישי וביום השביעי וחטאו ביום השביעי וכבס בגדיו ורחץ במים וטהר בערב**

19:20] - “If any party who has become impure fails to undergo purification, **that person shall be cut off from the congregation** for having defiled the Sanctuary of The Eternal One. The water of lustration was not dashed on that person, who is impure. [19:21a] - **That shall be for them a *chuuqah* for all time.**

19:21b] - “Further, the one who sprinkled the water of lustration is to launder those clothes; for **whoever touches the water of lustration shall be impure until evening**. [19:22] - Whatever that impure person touches shall be impure; and the person who touches the impure one shall also remain impure **until evening**.”

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִטְמָא וְלֹא יִתְחַטֵּא
וְנִכְרְתָהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִתּוֹךְ הַקְּהָל
כִּי אֶת מִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה טִמָּא מִי נֹדָה
לֹא זָרַק עָלָיו טִמָּא הוּא וְהִיתָה
לָהֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם

וּמִזֶּה מִי הַנֹּדָה יִכַּבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְהִנְגַּע
בְּמֵי הַנֹּדָה יִטְמָא עַד הָעֶרֶב וְכָל
אֲשֶׁר יִגַע בּוֹ הַטְּמָא יִטְמָא וְהִנְפִשׁ
הַנִּגְעָת תִּטְמָא עַד הָעֶרֶב

אמר שלמה על כל אלה עמדתי ופרשתי

P) Midrash Numbers Rabbah 19:3 - King Solomon declared: “I have stood and expounded in my wisdom on all these other matters—

ופרשה של פרה אדומה חקרתי ושאלתי ופשפשתי

“but the significance of **the red cow** I have investigated, and inquired, and cogitated—

אֲמַרְתִּי אֶחְכְּמָה וְהִיא רְחוּקָה מִמֶּנִּי

“yet have I declared: “For all my wisdom, **yet this is far beyond me**!”” [Proverbs 7:23].

Q) YisraEil AriEl, Temple Institute Handbook (2020) - The entire notion of ritual impurity is difficult enough to understand. But the most severe form of this state, contact with death, brings about a state of defilement so aggressively uncompromising in its spiritual hold that **it cannot be rectified except by purification through the ashes of the red cow.**

This topic encompasses an entire world-view so enigmatic that an individual seeking to fathom its implications will almost inevitably encounter confusion. The very fact that this concept is a *chuuqah* precludes complete understanding.

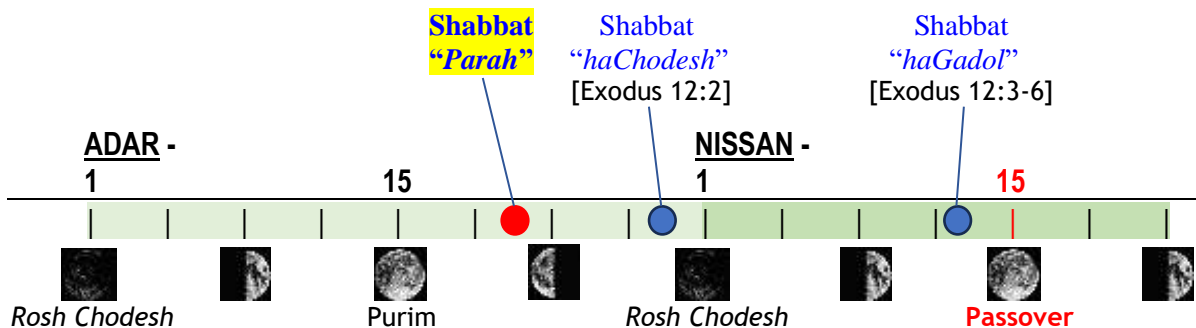
The *kohanim* who serve in the Temple— itself the source of eternal life, for it is the Abode of The Divine Glory of God— must distance themselves from the deception of death. For **the impurity rendered by death is the contamination of a false vision, a lie.** What men call “death” is nothing more than the bonds of transitory life breaking forth and giving way to eternal life.

R) AviTal Hochstein (1981-), Death, Impurity, and the Pursuit of Life – Shalom Hartmann Institute (July 4, 2019) - Our Torah text makes it clear that corpse impurity is connected to the realm of the sacred, that a dead body and a living person defiled by it both affect the sacred domain. Put another way: **The relationship between death and the sacred is mediated through the impurity of death.**

As such, there are two consequences to the decision not to purify oneself, and to remain in a state of impurity; two different ramifications when people stubbornly cling to death. First, the

very fact of the prolonged impurity in the community is sufficient to “defile the Sanctuary of The Eternal One” [Numbers 19:20b]. Furthermore, those who cling to the experience of the impurity of death are socially distanced: “That person shall be cut off from the congregation of the Israelites” [loc. cit. 19:20a].

Those who are living can be pure or impure. The very characteristic of being alive demonstrates a fundamental characteristic of fluidity and dynamism, which the Torah demands that the living embrace and embody. **This requirement for us to move on from death transforms the encounter with death into one that affirms life through a dynamic commitment to act, to move forward, to become pure again.**



S) Numbers 9:6-7 -

וַיְהִי אֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ טְמֵאִים
 לְנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת-
 הַפֶּסַח בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּקְרְבוּ לְפָנָי
 מִשָּׁה וּלְפָנָי אֶהְרֹן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הֲהִמָּה אֵלָיו
 אֲנַחְנוּ טְמֵאִים לְנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם

Now there were certain individuals who were *tamei* from contact with the dead, and as such were ineligible to celebrate the Passover sacrifice on its due day. Those people approached Moses and Aaron that day, and informed them: “We are *tamei* from contact with the dead—

לָמָּה נִגְרַע לְבַלְתִּי הַקָּרִיב אֶת-
 קִרְבִּן יְהוָה בְּמַעַדוֹ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל

“but why should we be precluded thereby from sharing the sacred offering of The Eternal One at its due time **with all the other** Israelites?”

T) Exodus 10:8-9 -

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים לְכוּ עִבְדוּ אֶת-
 הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

[Pharaoh] said to them: “Go forth and worship The Eternal One, your god. Who, precisely, is it that is going?”

מִי וּמִי הַהֹלְכִים

“Who, precisely, is it that is going?”

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּנֹעָרֵינוּ וּבְזָקְנֵינוּ
 גֵּילָךְ בְּבָנֵינוּ וּבְבָנוֹתֵינוּ בְּצֹאֲנֵנוּ
 וּבְבָקָרֵנוּ גֵּילָךְ

Moses said: “**We will be going with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters; with our flocks and our herds—**

פי חג-יהוה לנו

“for it is a feast of The Eternal One **for us [all]!**”