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The Red Heifer - Parah Adumah - פרה אדומה

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[I. Introduction 1](#_Toc51824669)

[II. Dividing the Ashes 3](#_Toc51824670)

[III. Outside the camp 5](#_Toc51824671)

[IV. Details of the Red Heifer 6](#_Toc51824672)

[V. Details of the Water used with the Heifer 8](#_Toc51824673)

[VI. Communication of Impurity 11](#_Toc51824674)

[VII. Those who do the Service of the Heifer 11](#_Toc51824675)

[VIII. Impurity from Temple Services 11](#_Toc51824676)

[IX. Temple Service of the Red Heifer 12](#_Toc51824677)

[X. The Golden Calf vs. Parah Adumah 13](#_Toc51824678)

[XI. Clean vs. Unclean 13](#_Toc51824679)

[XII. The Haftarah 14](#_Toc51824680)

[XIII. A Chok 16](#_Toc51824681)

[XIV. The Meaning of the Materials 17](#_Toc51824682)

[XV. Shamayim - Heavens 17](#_Toc51824683)

[XVI. Messianic Aspect 18](#_Toc51824684)

[XVII. Understanding the *Parah Adumah* 20](#_Toc51824685)

[XVIII. Conclusion 21](#_Toc51824686)

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# I. Introduction

The ritual of the Parah Adumah, the red heifer, is part of [one](one.html) of the most mysterious rituals described in the Torah. The purpose of this ritual is to [purify](purity.html) people from the defilement caused by contact with the dead. The ritual is discussed in Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) chapter 19. If you find it difficult to understand, don’t feel bad; our Sages themselves described it as beyond human understanding. What is so interesting about this ritual is that it purifies the impure, but it also renders the pure impure (i.e., everybody who participates in the ritual becomes impure).

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) will offer the tenth red cow according to Chazal.[[1]](#footnote-1) Thus, the existence of a red heifer is a possible, but not definite, [sign](signs.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html). If [Mashiach](mashiach.html) were [coming](coming.html), there would be a red heifer, but there could be a red heifer without [Mashiach](mashiach.html) [coming](coming.html).

In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine the [mitzva](cmds613.html)[[2]](#footnote-2) of the Parah Adumah, the red heifer. I am interested in learning why it is so important that we must read about it every year right after [Purim](Purim.html).

[Three](three.html) special Sabbaths take place before [Passover](passover.html). Each has a unique message for the mind and soul. The [first](one.html) is called [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Parah. See the [study](study.html) titled: [ANNUAL](annual.html).

[Shabbat](sabbath.html) Parah takes place [two](two.html) weeks before the month of [Nisan](feasts.html). Taken from Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 19:1-22, this portion of the Torah explains the ancient purification process involving the [sacrifice](korbanot.html) of the Parah Adumah, the Red Cow.

The period before [Rosh Chodesh](chodesh.html) [Nisan](feasts.html) is especially favorable for purification. This is [one](one.html) of the reasons that we read Parshat Parah at this [time](time.html) of the year.

But there is a more basic reason: In the [time](time.html) of the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html), it was on the [fourteenth](fourteen.html) of [Nisan](feasts.html) that the [Pesach](passover.html) ([Passover](passover.html)) lambs were brought by all of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People.

Parshat Parah deals with the [laws](law.html) of purification that were needed to [purify](purity.html) the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People from contact with a dead [body](body.html), a necessary preliminary to entering the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) and bringing the [Korban](korbanot.html) [Pesach](passover.html).[[3]](#footnote-3)

The Ashlamata, Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 36:16-38, describes the [time](time.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html), when [HaShem](hashem.html) will “sprinkle purifying waters on the Bne Israel” and remove from them all the impurities that have encrusted their souls.

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 36:26*** *I will remove the* [*heart*](body.html) *of stone from your flesh and give you a* [*heart*](body.html) *of flesh instead.*

What is the Parah Adumah?

The dictionary tells us what a heifer is:

heif·er (hèf er) noun

A young cow, especially [one](one.html) that has not yet given [birth](birth.html) to a calf.

From this definition we can see that a cow is a young, [female](male+female.html), cow. If the coat on the cow is red, then we have a Parah Adumah, a red heifer. (The traditional translation of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) “Parah” as ‘heifer’ is misleading, since among the specifications for the animal given by the Torah, the requirement that the cow not yet have calved is not mentioned and is relevant.)

The [mitzva](cmds613.html) of Parah Adumah involves taking a cow with reddish [hair](hair.html),[[4]](#footnote-4) that is blemish-free, i.e. fit for the Altar. Even though the Parah Adumah is NOT a [korban](korbanot.html);[[5]](#footnote-5) it is prepared away from the [Mikdash](mikdash.html)[[6]](#footnote-6) and [Temple](temple.html) across the valley, on the [Mount of Olives](east.html), [east](east.html) of the [Temple](temple.html).

Let’s begin by looking at the Torah portion for [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Parah, to see what the Torah has to say about the Parah Adumah:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 19:1-22*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This [is] the ordinance of the* [*law*](law.html) *which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath commanded, saying,* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a perfect red heifer without spot, wherein [is] no blemish, [and] upon which never came yoke: And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html)*, that he may bring her forth without the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, and [*[*one*](one.html)*] shall slay her before his* [*face*](body.html)*: And Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html) *shall take of her* [*blood*](body.html) *with his finger, and sprinkle of her* [*blood*](body.html) *directly before the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *of the congregation* [*seven*](seven.html) *times: And [*[*one*](one.html)*] shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her* [*blood*](body.html)*, with her dung, shall he burn: And the* [*priest*](priests.html) *shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast [it] into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the* [*priest*](priests.html) *shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, and the* [*priest*](priests.html) *shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. And a man [that is]* [*clean*](purity.html) *shall* [*gather*](gather.html) *up the ashes of the heifer, and lay [them] up without the* [*camp*](stages.html) *in a* [*clean*](purity.html) *place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it [is] a purification for* [*sin*](sin.html)*. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute forever. He that toucheth the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of any man shall be unclean* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. He shall* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself with it on the* [*third*](three.html) *day, and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall be* [*clean*](purity.html)*: but if he* [*purify*](purity.html) *not himself the* [*third*](three.html) *day, then the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall not be* [*clean*](purity.html)*. Whosoever toucheth the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness [is] yet upon him. This [is] the* [*law*](law.html)*, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that [is] in the tent, shall be unclean* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, [is] unclean. And whosoever toucheth* [*one*](one.html) *that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead* [*body*](body.html)*, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. And for an unclean [person] they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for* [*sin*](sin.html)*, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: And a* [*clean*](purity.html) *person shall take hyssop, and dip [it] in the water, and sprinkle [it] upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or* [*one*](one.html) *slain, or* [*one*](one.html) *dead, or a grave: And the* [*clean*](purity.html) *[person] shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the* [*third*](three.html) *day, and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day: and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be* [*clean*](purity.html) *at even. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he [is] unclean. And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even. And whatsoever the unclean [person] toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth [it] shall be unclean until even.*

**Questions[[7]](#footnote-7):**

“Take a perfect Parah Adumah (red heifer) which has no blemish…” What does the word “perfect” -*temima* - mean in this context? According to Bamidbar 19:2, it means “perfectly red”.



How many non-red [hairs](hair.html) disqualify a cow as a valid Parah Adumah? According to Bamidbar 19:2, it means “[two](two.html)“.

What happens to the [one](one.html) who:

1. Sprinkles the water mixed with the ashes of the Parah Adumah? He remains tahor (pure or [clean](purity.html)).
2. Touches the water? He, but not his clothing, contracts tumah ([impurity](purity.html))
3. Carries the water? He and his clothing contract tumah ([impurity](purity.html)).

Why was the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of the Parah Adumah entrusted to Elazar rather than to Aaron?[[8]](#footnote-8) - Because Aaron was involved in the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf.

The [mitzva](cmds613.html) of Parah Adumah included:

(1) burning the red cow to the state of ashes and,

(2) adding water to the ashes and using the mixture to sprinkle on [one](one.html) who had come in contact with a corpse.

A cow with red [hair](hair.html) was slaughtered on the [Mount of Olives](east.html) (See [EAST](east.html)), its remains were totally incinerated, and the resultant ashes were mixed with water drawn from a fresh-water spring. A small amount of the mixture was sprinkled on a defiled person twice in [one](one.html) week. This ceremony was not, of course, performed anew every [time](time.html) the mixture was needed. Rabbinic tradition tells us that throughout [Jewish](gen-jew.html) history up to the destruction of the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) it was necessary to slaughter only [nine](nine.html) red cows: the resultant mixture lasted for a very long [time](time.html). Indeed, we [know](daat.html) for certain that the mixture obtained from the latest ceremony before 70 C.E. outlasted the [Bet HaMikdash](mikdash.html) itself, and according to evidence in the [Gemara](orallaw.html) was still in ritual use some [two](two.html) hundred years or more after the destruction!

We are introduced to the ordinance of the Red Heifer halfway through the Book of Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)), in chapter 19. According to [Seder](haggada.html) Ha Olam, it was actually instituted on the second day of the [first](one.html) month (now called [Nisan](feasts.html)), in the second year of the [Exodus](exodus.html) (2449 from [Adam](adam.html)). The previous day had seen the [first](one.html) services of the newly completed [Mishkan](mikdash.html) ([Tabernacle](mikdash.html)). The following day, Moses was instructed to have a perfect red cow led outside the [camp](stages.html) by Eliezer. There, it was to be slaughtered. The animal was then burned with a mixture of cedar, hyssop, and scarlet coloring. A minute amount of the finely sifted ash was thrown into water. It could be a vessel or even a large [body](body.html) of water. Purification occurred only if the surface of the water was disturbed upon contact with the ashes.

# II. Dividing the Ashes[[9]](#footnote-9)

The ashes of the Parah Adumah were divided into [three](three.html) parts. As the Rambam[[10]](#footnote-10) explains:

“And they used to divide all the ashes into [three](three.html) portions: [one](one.html) was kept on the Rampart, [one](one.html) on the [Mount of Olives](east.html), and [one](one.html) was apportioned among all the watches of the [priests](priests.html). Those ashes which were apportioned among all the watches the [priests](priests.html) used for sanctifying water of purification, and the ashes kept on the [Mount of Olives](east.html) ordinary Israelites used for sprinkling, and the ashes kept on the Rampart were carefully reserved, for it is said, And it shall be kept[[11]](#footnote-11) for the congregation of the children of Israel,[[12]](#footnote-12) [teaching](teacher.html) that some of the ashes should be reserved.

So, too, they used to reserve on the Rampart some of the ashes of every red heifer they had burnt.

Now [nine](nine.html) red heifers were prepared from the [time](time.html) this [commandment](cmds613.html) was received until the [Temple](temple.html) was destroyed the second [time](time.html): the [first](one.html), Moshe our master prepared, the second, Ezra prepared, and there were [seven](seven.html) from Ezra to the destruction of the [Temple](temple.html). And a tenth King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will prepare, may he soon be revealed!”

Since all aspects of Torah are precise, it follows that there is a conceptual relationship between the [laws](law.html) of the Parah Adumah and the [coming](coming.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html). This is why the Rambam mentions the awaiting of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s arrival in the [laws](law.html) of Parah Adumah, although the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is mentioned in Yad HaChazakah (Mishne Torah) before the [laws](law.html) of the Parah Adumah.

In the [Mishna](orallaw.html), Tractate Parah, we learn that there have been a total of [nine](nine.html) perfectly red cows burned:

1. By Moses;

2. By Ezra;

3. By Shimon Ha Tzaddik;

4. Also by Shimon Ha Tzaddik;

5. By Yochanan, the [High Priest](priests.html);

6. Also by Yochanan, the [High Priest](priests.html);

7. By Eliehoenai, the son of Ha-Kof.

8. By Hanamel, the Egyptian.

9. By Ishmael, son of Piabi.

10. Will be burned by [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

The relationship between the [laws](law.html) of the Parah Adumah and the [coming](coming.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is as follows:

[Exile](galuyot.html) is related to the concept of ritual defilement, [coming](coming.html) in contact with [spiritual](physical.html) death. For the [exile](galuyot.html) came about through iniquities, the element of “You who cleave unto G-d your Lord are all alive today” was lacking. The ashes of the Parah Adumah, [offering](korbanot) purification from the defilement of death, allude to the [time](time.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s [coming](coming.html), the [time](time.html) of [redemption](redemption.html) from [exile](galuyot.html), when [Jews](gen-jew.html) sunder their bonds with [spiritual](physical.html) death, for they then all cleave to G-d and are thus vitally alive. The Brisker Rav said that the [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of the Parah (*Adumah . . .* [*Edom*](edom.html))[[13]](#footnote-13) Adumah, which Rashi explains to be the rectification for the golden calf,[[14]](#footnote-14) is the key to the Final [Redemption](redemption.html)![[15]](#footnote-15)

As rare as it may be, the [birth](thebirth.html) of a red heifer is nothing more than a curiosity. There is no source in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition that sees the [birth](thebirth.html) of a red heifer as a [sign](signs.html) of the arrival of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

The keepsake phenomenon had [two](two.html) aspects:

1. Each Parah Adumah set aside a part of its ashes to be a keepsake till the [time](time.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html),

2. Each Parah Adumah became part of that tradition which traced its association back to the [first](one.html) Parah Adumah, which Moshe (Moses) made.

The Red Heifer was sacrificed outside of the [Temple](temple.html) Mount, in contrast to all other sacrifices, which as a Chatat [sacrifice](korbanot.html), a [sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot), which atones for inadvertent transgressions.

Chatat: [Sin](sin.html) [Offering](korbanot)

A [sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot) is an [offering](korbanot) to atone for and purge a [sin](sin.html). It is an expression of sorrow for the error and a [desire](needs.html) to be reconciled with G-d. The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) term for this [type](types.html) of [offering](korbanot) is Chatat, from the word Chet, meaning “missing the mark.” A Chatat could only be offered for unintentional [sins](sin.html) committed through carelessness, not for intentional, malicious [sins](sin.html). The size of the [offering](korbanot) varied according to the nature of the [sin](sin.html) and the financial means of the sinner. Some chatatot are individual and some are communal. Communal offerings represent the interdependence of the [community](community.html), and the fact that we are all responsible for each other’s [sins](sin.html). A few special chatatot could not be [eaten](eating.html), but for the most part, for the average person’s personal [sin](sin.html), the Chatat was [eaten](eating.html) by the [Kohanim](priests.html).

# III. Outside the [camp](stages.html)

**Where is "outside the** [**camp**](stages.html)**"?**

Well, let’s look at an [event](feasts.html) which took place "outside the [camp](stages.html)". Notice that the bull is burned "outside the [camp](stages.html)" while the [blood](body.html) is sprinkled towards the front of the Tent of [Moed](settimes.html):

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 19:1-9***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses and Aaron: "This is a requirement of the* [*law*](law.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke. Give it to Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html)*; it is to be taken outside the* [*camp*](stages.html) *and slaughtered in his presence. Then Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html) *is to take some of its* [*blood*](body.html) *on his finger and sprinkle it* [*seven*](seven.html) *times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. While he watches, the heifer is to be burned--its hide, flesh,* [*blood*](body.html) *and offal. The* [*priest*](priests.html) *is to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. After that, the* [*priest*](priests.html) *must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water. He may then come into the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, but he will be ceremonially unclean till evening. The man who burns it must also wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he too will be unclean till evening. "A man who is* [*clean*](purity.html) *shall* [*gather*](gather.html) *up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially* [*clean*](purity.html) *place outside the* [*camp*](stages.html)*. They shall be kept by the Israelite* [*community*](community.html) *for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from* [*sin*](sin.html)*.*

[***Moed***](settimes.html) ***Katan 28a*** *The ashes of the Red Heifer are employed in gaining* [*Forgiveness*](forgive.html)*:*

***Middot 2:4*** *All the walls that were there on the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *Mount were high, with the exception of the* [*eastern*](east.html) *wall, so that the* [*Priest*](priests.html) *who burned the red heifer stood on top of the* [*Mount of Olives*](east.html) *and was able to see directly into the entrance of the* [*Sanctuary*](mikdash.html) *when the* [*blood*](body.html) *was tossed.*

***Middot 1:3*** *The surrounding wall of the whole quadrangle of the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *area of the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *mount had* [*five*](five.html) *gates, namely the* [*two*](two.html) *Huldah Gates (named after the prophetess) on the south that served for entrance and exit to the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *Mount, the Kiphonos Gate on the west that served for entrance and exit, the Tadi Gate on the north which served no purpose, the* [*Eastern*](east.html) *Gate whereon the Castle of Shushan was sculptured through which the* [*High Priest*](priests.html) *who burned the red heifer and all the* [*priests*](priests.html) *that assisted therewith went forth to the* [*Mount of Olives*](east.html) *(the Mount of Installation).*

From this we see that outside the [camp](stages.html), in this case, meant on the top of the [Mount of Olives](east.html). This is also interesting because the [Kohen](priests.html) on the top of the [Mount of Olives](east.html) could see the [Kohen](priests.html) ([priest](priests.html)) in the holy place.

When [Yeshua](yeshua.html) died, notice what people SAW:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 23:44-48*** *It was now about the* [*sixth*](six.html) *hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the* [*ninth*](nine.html) *hour, For the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *stopped shining. And the curtain of the* [*temple*](temple.html) *was torn in* [*two*](two.html)*.* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." When all the people who had* [*gathered*](gather.html) *to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their* [*breasts*](body.html) *and went away.*

***Matityahu (Matthew) 27:50-54*** *And when* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the* [*temple*](temple.html) *was torn in* [*two*](two.html) *from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the* [*bodies*](body.html) *of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*'* [*resurrection*](techiyat.html) *they went into the holy* [*city*](city.html) *and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"*

***Marqos (Mark) 15:37-39*** *With a loud* [*cry*](mashal.html)*,* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *breathed his last. The curtain of the* [*temple*](temple.html) *was torn in* [*two*](two.html) *from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, heard his* [*cry*](mashal.html) *and saw that he so cried out, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"*

I believe that the only way that they could say that the curtain was torn at the same “moment” that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) died, was to **see** it. **What made the centurion say that this was "the Son of God"?** If the centurion [knew](daat.html) how thick the curtain was and how important the curtain was, he might very well understand the significance. He surely did not think that the fact that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) died and cried out would make him the Son of God! So, the only place "outside the [camp](stages.html)" where the curtain could be see was on the [Mount of Olives](east.html), in the same place where the red heifer was burned by a [Kohen](priests.html) ([priest](priests.html)) who was not [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol ([High Priest](priests.html)).

# IV. Details of the Red Heifer

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) has much to say about the Red Heifer.

***Pesachim 26a-b*** *Come and hear: If he took it [the heifer] into the team and it [accidentally] did some threshing, it is fit; [but if it was] in order that it should suck and thresh, it is unfit. Now here it is impossible [to do otherwise], and he intends [to benefit], and he [the Tanna]* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that it is unfit! — There it is different, because Scripture saith, ‘which hath not been wrought with,’ [implying] in all cases. If so, even in the* [*first*](one.html) *clause too [the same applies]? — This can only be compared to the following: If a bird rested upon it [the red heifer], it remains fit; but if it copulated with a* [*male*](male+female.html)*, it is unfit. What is the reason? — Said R. Papa: If it were written ‘‘abad’ and we read it ‘abad’, [I would say, it becomes unfit] only if he himself wrought with it. While if ‘‘ubad’ were written and we read it ‘‘ubad,’ [it would imply] even if it were of itself. Since however, it is written ‘‘abad’’ [active], whilst read ‘‘ubad’’ [passive]. ‘it was wrought with’ must be similar to ‘he wrought [with it]’: just as ‘he wrought [with it]’ must mean that he approved of it, so also ‘it was wrought with’ refers only to what he approved.*

***Menachoth 51b-52a*** *‘And concerning the Red Cow [they ordained] that the* [*law*](law.html) *of sacrilege does not apply to its ashes’. Is not this the* [*law*](law.html) *of the Torah? For it was* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: It is a* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot)*: this* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that it is subject to the* [*law*](law.html) *of sacrilege; and ‘it’ implies that only it [the cow] is subject to the* [*law*](law.html) *of sacrilege but its ashes are not subject to the* [*law*](law.html) *of sacrilege! — Said R. Ashi: There were* [*two*](two.html) *ordinances. By the* [*law*](law.html) *of the Torah only it [the cow] is subject to the* [*law*](law.html) *of sacrilege but not its ashes; but when they saw that people treated [the ashes] lightly and applied them to wounds, they ordained they should be subject to the* [*law*](law.html) *of sacrilege. When they saw, however, that people in doubtful cases of uncleanness would avoid the sprinkling, they reverted to the* [*law*](law.html) *of the Torah.*

***Bava Metzia 30a*** *Come and hear: If he took it [the heifer] into the team and it [accidentally] did some threshing, it is fit; [but if it was] in order that it should suck and thresh, it is unfit. But here it is for their mutual benefit, and yet it is* [*taught*](teacher.html) *that it is unfit! — There it is different, because Scripture wrote, which hath not beets wrought with — under any condition. If so, the same should apply to the* [*first*](one.html) *clause too? This [then] can only be compared to what we learnt: If a bird rested upon it [the red heifer] — it remains fit; but if it copulated with a* [*male*](male+female.html)*, it becomes unfit. Why so? — In accordance with R. Papa’s dictum. For R. papa said: Had Scripture written ‘ubad, and we read it ‘ubad, I would have said [that the* [*law*](law.html) *holds good] even if it were of itself; whilst if it were written ‘abad, and we read it ‘abad, I would have said, [it becomes unfit] only if he himself wrought with it. Since, however, it is written ‘abad [active], whilst read ‘ubad [passive], we require that ‘it was wrought with’ shall be similar to ‘he wrought with it’; just as ‘he wrought [with it]’ must mean that he approved of it, so also ‘it was wrought with’ refers only to what he approved.*

What happens if someone slaughters the Red Heifer outside the [Temple](temple.html): The [Gemara](orallaw.html) explains the answer:

***Temurah[[16]](#footnote-16) 6b*** *The Master said: ‘If it means, Ye shall not kill, is not this mentioned below?’ Where is this stated? — It has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Blind or broken or maimed ye shall not offer these unto the Lord. What does Scripture* [*teach*](teacher.html) *us here? If it means not to dedicate, this is already stated above. Then what does Scripture mean by ‘Ye shall not offer’? [That] ye shall not kill. [The text:] Nor make an* [*offering*](korbanot) *by* [*fire*](fire.html) *of them refers to the burning [of the sacrifices on the altar]. From this I could only prove the burning of the whole* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *[as being prohibited]. Whence, however, will you deduce that the same applies to a part [of a* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*]? Because the text states: Of them. Whence will you deduce the prohibitory* [*law*](law.html) *for the sprinkling of the* [*blood*](body.html) *[of blemished animals]? The text states: Upon the altar. [The succeeding words:] ‘Unto the Lord’ include the case of a scapegoat. But do [the words]: ‘Unto the Lord’ come to include [something additional]? Has it not been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Now if you expound the word* [*korban*](korbanot.html) *[*[*offering*](korbanot)*], am I to understand it to include the case of animals dedicated for* [*Temple*](temple.html) *repairs, which are described as* [*korban*](korbanot.html) *as for instance when it says: We have therefore brought the Lord’s* [*korban*](korbanot.html)*? The text, however, states: And hath not brought it unto the door of the tent of the meeting. [We therefore argue as follows]: In respect of whatever is fit for the door of the tent of the meeting,* [*one*](one.html) *may become liable on account of the prohibition of slaughtering consecrated animals outside the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *court; but in respect of whatever is not fit for the door of the tent of the meeting,* [*one*](one.html) *cannot become liable on account of the prohibition of slaughtering consecrated animals outside the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *court. Shall I therefore exclude these but not the Red Heifer and the scapegoat, since they are fit for ‘the door of the tent of the meeting’? Therefore the text states: ‘Unto the Lord’; [the* [*law*](law.html) *concerning slaughtering outside the* [*Temple*](temple.html) *court applies] only to those designated as ‘unto the Lord’, but these are excluded, for they are not designated ‘unto the Lord’! — Said Raba: There we go according to the context [and here we go according to the context]. There, since the text, ‘Unto the door of the tent of the meeting’ includes, therefore the text, ‘Unto the Lord’ in that* [*connection*](connection.html) *excludes. Here, however, as the text ‘by* [*fire*](fire.html)*’ excludes, therefore the text, ‘Unto the Lord’ in that* [*connection*](connection.html) *includes.*

Its level of sanctification is that of items which are sanctified to be sold, with the proceeds to go for [Temple](temple.html) upkeep:

***Temurah 20a*** *Said Rabbi: I do not approve of the opinion of R. Simeon with reference to a* [*Passover*](passover.html)[*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, since unused [money or animals] dedicated for the* [*Passover*](passover.html) *is offered as peace-offerings. And why does he not Say: I do not approve of the opinion of R. Simeon in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with a guilt-*[*offering*](korbanot)*, since an unused guilt-*[*offering*](korbanot) *is offered as a burnt-*[*offering*](korbanot)*? — Rabbi holds the opinion of the Rabbis who say: The surpluses [of sacrificial appropriation] belong to the* [*freewill*](freewill.html)*-offerings of the congregation and the congregation cannot effect exchange. Now it is assumed that the reason why R. Simeon holds that a* [*female*](male+female.html) *set aside as a burnt-*[*offering*](korbanot) *can effect exchange is because a* [*female*](male+female.html) *has the* [*name*](name.html) *of burnt-*[*offering*](korbanot) *[in the case of a poor man who brings] a burnt-*[*offering*](korbanot) *of a bird. According to this a cow set aside by a* [*High Priest*](priests.html) *for his [sacrificial] bullock, should become holy and effect exchange, since we have the case of the cow of* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot)*? — The cow of* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot) *is regarded as a dedication for* [*Temple*](temple.html) *repairs and a dedication for* [*Temple*](temple.html) *repairs cannot effect exchange. Then if an individual sets aside a goat instead of a she-goat [for his* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot)*], let it become holy, since we find elsewhere the case of a ‘ruler’ who sets aside a goat for a* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot)*? Or, again, if a ‘ruler’ sets aside a she-goat instead of a goat [as a* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot)*], let it become holy, since elsewhere an individual sets aside a she-goat [for a* [*sin*](sin.html)*-*[*offering*](korbanot)*]? — These are* [*two*](two.html) *Separate persons [*[*bodies*](body.html)*]. But if he sinned before he was a ‘ruler’, even if he set aside a goat in place of a she-goat, let it become holy [and effect exchange] since, if he sinned now, [after his* [*appointment*](appointm.html)*] he brings a goat? — Here, [it is different, for] since he did not* [*sin*](sin.html) *[as a ‘ruler’], he is not required to bring a goat. If so, here too, he does not [actually] bring a burnt-*[*offering*](korbanot) *of a bird? — R. Simeon holds the opinion of R. Eleazar b. Azariah. For we have learnt: [If* [*one*](one.html) *says] ‘Behold, I take upon myself to bring a burnt-*[*offering*](korbanot)*’, he brings a sheep, whereas R. Eleazar b. Azariah says: Or a turtle-dove or a pigeon.*

Using a red heifer, which had been a prostitute’s fee:

***Temurah 30b*** *Our Rabbis have* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: [Scripture says:] In the house of the Lord thy G-d, this excludes the case of the red heifer which does not come to the House. This is the* [*teaching*](teacher.html) *of R. Eleazar. The Sages, however say: This includes beaten gold plates [as forbidden for overlaying]. Whose opinion is that of the Sages? Said R. Hisda: It is that of R. Jose b. Judah. For it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: If he gave her gold as hire, R. Jose b. Judah said:* [*One*](one.html) *must not use it to make beaten gold plates even for the space behind the Holy of Holies.*

# V. Details of the Water used with the Heifer

How the water was brought, to avoid [impurity](purity.html):

[***Succah***](succoth.html) ***21a*** *Is then R. Judah of the opinion that a tent which is not made by the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of man is no valid tent? Let us point out an incongruity: [We have learnt] Courtyards were built in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *over a* [*rock*](rock.html)*, and beneath them was a hollow [made] because of [the* [*fear*](fear.html) *of] a grave in the depths, and they used to bring their pregnant women, and there they gave* [*birth*](birth.html) *to their children and there they reared them for [the service of the Red] Heifer. And they brought oxen, upon whose back were placed doors, and the children sat upon them with stone cups in their* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*. When they reached Siloam they went down into the water and filled them, then ascended and sat again [on the doors]. R. Jose said, [Each child] used to let [his cup] down and fill it from his place because of [the* [*fear*](fear.html) *of] a grave in the depths; and it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*, R. Judah said, They did not bring doors, but oxen. Now oxen, surely, are a ‘tent’ which is not made by the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of man, and does it not nevertheless* [*teach*](teacher.html)*, R. Judah said, They did not bring doors, but oxen?-When R. Dimi came, he said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Eleazar, R. Judah agrees in, the case [of a ‘tent’ that is as large as] a fistful.*

The water should be filled directly into the vessel in which it will be sanctified: Pesachim 34b-35a.

The Water may not come from a Running Spring:

[***Shabbat***](sabbath.html) ***109a*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*:* [*One*](one.html) *may bathe in the water of Gerar, in the water of Hammethan, in the water of Essa, and in the water of Tiberias, but not in the Great Sea [the Mediterranean], or in the water of steeping, or in the Lake of Sodom. But this contradicts it:* [*One*](one.html) *may bathe in the water of Tiberias and in the Great Sea, but not in the water of steeping or in the Lake of Sodom. Thus [the rulings on] the Great Sea are contradictory. — Said R. Johanan, There is no difficulty:* [*one*](one.html) *agrees with R. Meir, the other with R. Judah. For we learnt: All seas are like a* [*mikveh*](forty.html)*, for it is said, and the gathering of [*[*mikveh*](forty.html)*] the waters called he Seas: this is R. Meir’s view. R. Judah said: The Great Sea [alone] is like a* [*mikveh*](forty.html)*, ‘seas’ being stated only because it contains many kinds of waters. R. Jose maintained: All seas [including the Great Sea]* [*purify*](purity.html) *when running, but they are unfit for zabim, lepers, and to be sanctified as the water of lustration.*

Swamp water:

***Sanhedrin 5b*** *We were told above that Rabbi authorized him, Rabbah, and Rab respectively, to] decide in matters of ritual* [*law*](law.html)*. Since he was learned in the* [*law*](law.html)*, what need had he to obtain permission? — Because of the following incident, for it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Once Rabbi went to a certain place and saw its inhabitants kneading the dough without the necessary precaution against Levitical uncleanness. Upon inquiry, they told him that a certain scholar on a visit* [*taught*](teacher.html) *them: Water of bize’im [ponds] does not render* [*food*](food.html) *liable to become unclean. In reality, he referred to bezim [eggs], but they thought he said bize’im [ponds]. They further erred in the application of the following* [*Mishna*](orallaw.html)*: The waters of Keramyon and Pigah, because they are ponds, are unfit for purification purposes. They thought that since this water was unfit for purification, it likewise could not render* [*food*](food.html) *liable to become unclean. But this conclusion is unwarranted, for whereas there, that is in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with the purification* [*offering*](korbanot)*, running water is required, waters, from any source, can render* [*food*](food.html) *liable to uncleanness. There and then it was decreed that a disciple must not give decisions unless he was granted permission by his* [*teacher*](teacher.html)*.*

Whether the ashes must be poured into the water, or could fall in and be valid:

[***Succah***](succoth.html) ***37a-b*** *Rabbah further stated, A man shall not hold the hoshana with a scarf, because it is required that the ‘taking’ shall be complete, and in this case it is not. Raba, however, ruled, Taking hold by means of something else is also regarded as a valid ‘taking’. Whence, said Raba, do I derive that taking hold by means of something else is also regarded as a valid taking? From what we have learnt: If the hyssop is too short, it may be made to suffice with a thread or with a reed and so it is dipped and brought up, but* [*one*](one.html) *must hold the hyssop itself when sprinkling. Now why [is this permitted]? Did not the Divine* [*Law*](law.html) *say, And he shall take hyssop and dip? May we not then deduce therefrom that taking hold by means of something else is also regarded as a valid ‘taking’? — But whence the proof? That case perhaps is different; since [the thread or reed] was joined on [to the hyssop], it is regarded as part of it? — In fact [the deduction is made] from the following: [If the ashes of the Red Heifer] fell [of their own accord] from their tube into the trough they are invalid.*

*From this it follows that if the man himself threw them into the water they are [presumably] valid. Now why [should that be so]? Did not the Divine* [*Law*](law.html) *say, And they shall take of the ashes . . . and he shall put? May we not then deduce that taking by means of something else is also regarded as a valid ‘taking’.*

Whether the water goes in the vessel [first](one.html), or the ashes do:

***Temurah 12a, 12b***[*MISHNA*](orallaw.html)*. [ANYTHING WHICH HAS BECOME SUBJECT TO THE* [*LAW*](law.html) *OF TERUMAH THROUGH] AN ADMIXTURE CAN AFFECT A [SECOND] MIXTURE ONLY IN PROPORTION. [DOUGH]* [*LEAVENED*](chametz.html) *[THROUGH TERUMAH] CAN AFFECT [ANOTHER DOUGH] ONLY IN PROPORTION. DRAWN WATER CAN DISQUALIFY A MIKWEH ONLY IN PROPORTION. WATER OF PURIFICATION BECOMES RITUALLY FIT ONLY WITH THE PUTTING OF ASHES [IN THE WATER]. A GRAVE AREA CANNOT CREATE A GRAVE AREA. [THE SEPARATION OF] TERUMAH CANNOT BE REPEATED. AN EXCHANGE CANNOT BE USED TO EFFECT ANOTHER EXCHANGE. THE OFFSPRING OF A DEDICATED ANIMAL CANNOT EFFECT AN EXCHANGE. R. JUDAH SAYS: THE OFFSPRING OF A DEDICATED ANIMAL CAN EFFECT AN EXCHANGE. THEY SAID TO HIM: A DEDICATED ANIMAL CAN EFFECT EXCHANGE, BUT NEITHER THE OFFSPRING OF A DEDICATED ANIMAL [NOR AN EXCHANGE] CAN EFFECT EXCHANGE.*

*THE WATERS OF PURIFICATION BECOME RITUALLY FIT etc. Whose opinion is here represented? — R. Hiyya b. Abba reported in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Johanan: It is not the opinion of R. Simeon. For it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: If* [*one*](one.html) *puts the ashes [into the vessel]* [*first*](one.html) *before the water, it [the water of purification] is disqualified, whereas R. Simeon says: It is fit. What is the reason of R. Simeon? — Since it is written: And for the unclean they shall take the ashes [‘afar] of the burning of the purification from* [*sin*](sin.html) *[and the running water shall be put thereto]. And it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: R. Simeon says, Now is it ‘afar [*[*dust*](rock.html)*]? Is it not efer [ashes]? The text departs from the natural expression in the matter in order to permit of a Gezerah shavah. We read here ‘afar and we read there ‘afar. Just as there the ‘afar is placed upon the water, so here also the ‘afar is placed upon the water. And just as here if the* [*dust*](rock.html) *is placed in the vessel before the water the ritual is fit, so there if he placed the* [*dust*](rock.html) *before the water, it [the water] is ritually fit. And whence do we derive this [in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with waters of purification]? — There are* [*two*](two.html) *Scriptural texts. It* [*first*](one.html) *says: And [running water] shall be put thereto, from which we see that ashes are put* [*first*](one.html) *in the vessel, and then the text continues: Running water . . . in a vessel. How [do we reconcile these texts]? If he wishes [he puts] ‘afar at the bottom [of the vessel], and if he wishes, he puts ‘afar on top [of the water]. And what is the reason of our Tanna? — He can answer you: The latter part of the verse is to be strictly interpreted, and [the text]: ‘And [running water] shall be put thereto* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *us that* [*one*](one.html) *must mix [the ashes and the water together]. But why do you see fit to say that the latter part of the verse is to be strictly interpreted? perhaps the* [*first*](one.html) *part of the text is to be strictly interpreted, [and the text, ‘in a vessel’* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *us that the waters must be fresh in the vessel]? — You cannot interpret the text in this way: Just as we find with regard to all other cases that which makes [the water] ritually fit is placed on top, so here that which makes [the water of purification] ritually fit is put on top.*

[***Shabbat***](sabbath.html) ***137a*** *And an anonymous [statement in the] Sifra is according to R. Judah. R. Nahman b.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *said: We too learnt likewise: All are eligible to sanctify,* [*save*](salvation.html) *a deaf-mute, an imbecile, and a minor. R. Judah admits a minor, but invalidates a woman and an hermaphrodite. This proves it — And why is* [*circumcision*](circumcz.html) *different? Because it is written, every* [*male*](male+female.html) *among you shall be* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*.*

***Niddah 9a*** *A NURSING WOMAN’? A WOMAN BEFORE SHE HAS WEANED etc. Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: A nursing mother whose child died within* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *months is in exactly the same position as all other women and causes retrospective uncleanness for a period of* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *hours or from the previous to the last examination. If, therefore, she continued to suck it for* [*four*](four.html) *or* [*five*](five.html) *years it suffices for her to reckon her period of uncleanness from the* [*time*](time.html) *she has observed the flow; so R. Meir. R. Judah, R. Jose and R. Simeon ruled: Only during the* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *months does it suffice for women to reckon their uncleanness from the* [*time*](time.html) *they have observed a flow. Therefore, even if she suckled it for* [*four*](four.html) *or* [*five*](five.html) *years she causes uncleanness retrospectively for* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *hours or from the previous to the last examination. Now if you will carefully consider [the views just expressed] you will find that according to the view of R. Meir the menstrual* [*blood*](body.html) *is decomposed and turns into milk while according to the view of R. Jose, R. Judah and R. Simeon the woman’s limbs are disjointed and her natural vigor does not return before the lapse of* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *months. Why the necessity for the ‘therefore’ of R. Meir? — On account of the ‘therefore’ of R. Jose. But why the necessity for the ‘therefore’ of R. Jose? — It might have been assumed that R. Jose maintains that there are* [*two*](two.html) *[causes]; hence we were informed [that he upholds the* [*one*](one.html) *cause only]. So it was also* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: The menstrual* [*blood*](body.html) *is decomposed and turns into milk; so R. Meir. R. Jose stated: Her limbs are disjointed and her natural strength does not return before* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *months. R. Elai explained: What is R. Meir’s reason? That it is written, Who can bring a* [*clean*](purity.html) *thing from out of an unclean? Is it not the Only* [*One*](one.html)*? And the Rabbis? — R. Johanan replied: The reference is to semen which is unclean, while the man who is created from it is* [*clean*](purity.html)*; and R. Eleazar replied: The reference is to the water of sprinkling in the case of which the man who sprinkles it as well as the man upon whom it is sprinkled is* [*clean*](purity.html) *while he who touches it is unclean. But is the man who sprinkles it* [*clean*](purity.html)*? Is it not in fact written, And he that sprinkleth the water of sprinkling shall wash his clothes? — What is meant by ‘He that sprinkleth’? He that touches it. But is it not actually written, ‘He that sprinkleth’ and also ‘He that toucheth’? Furthermore, is not ‘He that sprinkleth’ required to wash his clothes while ‘He that toucheth’ is not required to do so? — Rather say: What is meant by ‘He that sprinkleth’? He that carries. Then why was it not written, ‘He that carries’? — We were informed that uncleanness is not contracted unless* [*one*](one.html) *carried the minimum quantity prescribed for sprinkling. This is a satisfactory explanation according to him who holds that sprinkling must be performed with a prescribed minimum of the water . What, however, can be said according to him who holds that no prescribed minimum is required? — Even according to him who holds that no prescribed quantity is required the ruling refers only to the quantity applied to the* [*body*](body.html) *of the man but as regards that which is in the vessel a prescribed quantity is required; as we have learnt: What must be the quantity of water that it shall suffice for a sprinkling? As much as suffices for both the dipping therein of the tops of the stalks and for the sprinkling. It is, in fact, in view of such* [*laws*](law.html) *that Solomon observed, I said: ‘I will get wisdom’; but it was far from me.*

# VI. Communication of [Impurity](purity.html)

The water Causes [Impurity](purity.html) to People and to [Impurity](purity.html) for an animal which is Slaughtered right after drinking the Water: Pesachim 17b-18a.

# VII. Those who do the Service of the Heifer

If the Sprinkler is someone from whom the sprinklee had vowed not to receive benefit: [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h 28a.

# VIII. [Impurity](purity.html) from [Temple](temple.html) Services

[Impurity](purity.html) of the bringer of the [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) Scapegoat: Yuma 67b.

The Water of the Red Heifer causes [Impurity](purity.html) to People and to Vessels: Pesachim 17b.

Vessels: Pesachim 17b.

**Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Midrashic Homilies for** [**Shabbat**](sabbath.html) **Parah Adumah, Pisqa IV:1 - All those who are engaged in the work of preparing the ashes of the red cow from beginning to end impart uncleanness to clothing** [M. Par. 4:4], while the cow itself effects purification. [Supply:] Who has done so? Who has commanded so? Who has decreed so? Is it not the [One](one.html), is it not the Unique [One](one.html) of the [world](worlds.html)?

**Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Midrashic Homilies for** [**Shabbat**](sabbath.html) **Parah Adumah, Pisqa IV:VI -** R. Joshua of Sikhnin in the [name](name.html) of R. Levi: **There are** [**four**](four.html) **matters concerning which the impulse to do evil brings doubts, and in the case of all of them, the word statute occurs.** These are they: the rules governing the prohibition of marrying a brother’s wife, the prohibition of mixed species, the rule governing the goat that is sent forth [on the Day of [Atonement](kippur.html)] and the rule governing the red cow. As to the matter of the brother’s wife: *You will not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife* (Lev. 18:16). But it is also written, *Her levir will have sexual relations [and take her as his wife]* (Deut. 25:5). When the brother is alive, she is forbidden, but when he dies without children, she is permitted to him, and in that case the word statute occurs: ***You will guard my statutes and my judgments, which*** [***one***](one.html) ***will do and live***(Lev. 18:5).As to the matter of mixed species: *You will not wear mixed species [wool and linen together]*(Deut. 22:11), but the case of a woolen cloak bearing linen show-[fringes](tzitzith.html) is [one](one.html) in which it is permitted to do just that. And in that case too the word statute occurs: ***You will keep my statutes***(Lev. 19:19). As to the matter of the goat that is sent away: *The* [*one*](one.html) *who sends the goat to Azazel shall wash his clothes* (Lev. 16:26). The goat itself effects [atonement](atonemen.html) for others [yet imparts uncleanness]. And in that regard, the word statute occurs: ***And you shall have this rule as an eternal statute*** (Lev. 16:29).And as to the red cow: there we have learned in the Mishnah, **All those who are occupied with the work of burning the red cow from beginning to end impart uncleanness to clothing.** The cow’s ashes themselves effect purification for the unclean [and yet those who burn the cow are unclean]. And the word statute occurs in context: ***This is the statute of the Torah***(Num. 19:23).”

# IX. [Temple](temple.html) Service of the Red Heifer

Which [type](types.html) of hyssop is used: [Shabbat](sabbath.html) 109b, [Succah](succoth.html) 13a

The binding of the hyssop: [Succah](succoth.html) 13a

Using hyssop which is also [known](daat.html) by a joint [name](name.html): [Succah](succoth.html) 13a

Using a truncated hyssop: Menachoth 38b.

Sprinkling the Water on [Shabbat](sabbath.html), if it is the day before [Pesach](passover.html), to allow someone to [eat](eating.html) the [Pesach](passover.html) [Offering](korbanot): Pesachim 65b-66a.

Which parts of the Service require the [Head](body.html) [Kohen](priests.html): Kiddushin 26b.

How to dip a too-short hyssop into the water: [Succah](succoth.html) 37a.

What if [one](one.html) Sprinkled the water on the subject’s lips, or in his [mouth](body.html): Kiddushin 25a.

What [time](time.html) the sprinkling is done: Megillah 20a [2x], 20b.

The [type](types.html) of rope used to bind together the cow when it was being burned: Eruvin 58a.

Purifying someone by sprinkling the water on them on [Shabbat](sabbath.html): Eruvin 67b-68a.

**\* \* \***

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) relates the story of a non-[Jew](gen-jew.html), Dama ben Nesina, who possessed a precious jewel needed to replace a stone missing from the breastplate of the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol. The Sages came to him and offered him a fortune for the stone, but he would not sell it to them because the key to the safe in which the jewel was kept was under the [head](body.html) of his [sleeping](mashal.html) father. He would not wake his father, even for a king’s ransom.

Because he was prepared to give up so much to honor his father, he was rewarded that a red heifer was born into his flock, and he sold that animal to the Sages for the same amount that he had forfeited.

Why was Dama ben Nesina rewarded specifically by a Parah Adumah being born into his flock?

The role of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People is to be a “[Nation](nations.html) of [priests](priests.html) and a holy people”, singled out from the rest of the [nations](nations.html) by their exemplary behavior. So, when Dama ben Nesina, a non-[Jew](gen-jew.html), demonstrated such self-[sacrifice](korbanot.html) to honor his father, it awakened an accusation in the Heavenly courts against the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People. For here was a non-[Jew](gen-jew.html) whose devotion to the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of honoring his father was at least equal to that of the [Jews](gen-jew.html), and where was the exemplary difference of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People?

Thus, the red heifer which was bought from him by the Sages demonstrated that even though Dama ben Nesina was capable of giving up a fortune for a [mitzva](cmds613.html) that logic dictates, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People are prepared to give up an equal fortune for a [mitzva](cmds613.html) that is infinitely beyond the grasp of human logic, merely because it is the will of [HaShem](hashem.html).

The transformation of Rav Yochanan ben Torta is not as well [known](daat.html). The source is the Pesiqta which describes the incredible, [spiritually](physical.html) [redemptive](redemption.html) power of the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer):

***Pesiqta Rabbati Parsha 14*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: There was once a story of a* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *who owned a cow, with which he used to plow. He fell on hard times, so he sold his cow to* [*one*](one.html) *particular non-*[*Jew*](gen-jew.html)*. The non-*[*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *took it out and plowed with it for* [*six*](six.html) *days of the week. On* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html) *he took it out to plow, he placed it under the yoke, he walked and beat the animal, but it would not budge from its place. When he saw this he went to the* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *who sold him the cow and told him “Take your cow. It must be injured, for no matter how much I beat it, it will not move from its place.” The* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *understood that it must be because of* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*, being that the cow was accustomed to rest on the* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*. He said, “Come and I will get the cow moving”.  When they got there he went over to the cow and said in its ear “Cow, cow, you* [*know*](daat.html) *that when I owned you, you ploughed during the week, and rested on* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*. Now due to my* [*sins*](sin.html) *[I lost my money and had to sell you. Now] you are owned by a non-*[*Jew*](gen-jew.html)*. Please, I ask you, get up and plough”. The cow immediately arose and ploughed. The non-*[*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *said, “I ask of you, please take your cow. Until now I have been moving myself trying to get the cow up. Moreover I am not releasing you until you tell me what you said in that cow’s ear. I exhausted myself and beat the animal and it would not get up.” The* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *tried to placate the non-*[*Jew*](gen-jew.html)*, and said, “It was not magic and the cow is not possessed, but this is what I said in its ear … and as a result it got up and ploughed.” The Non-*[*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *became immediately frightened; he said, “If a cow which cannot* [*speak*](mashal.html) *and has no human intelligence can recognize its Creator, while I whom my Creator created in His image, and endowed me with human intelligence – I don’t recognize that I have a Creator?!” He immediately came and converted. He* [*studied*](study.html) *and* [*merited*](merit.html) *[great success in] Torah. They called him Yochanan ben Torta (literally, son of the ox), and until this very day the Rabbis* [*teach*](teacher.html)[*laws*](law.html) *in his* [*name*](name.html)*. And if you are astounded how a cow brought a person under the wings of the Shechinah, by virtue of a cow is the* [*purity*](purity.html) *of the entire* [*community*](community.html) *of Israel.*

# X. The Golden Calf vs. Parah Adumah

Our Hakhamim (Rabbis) tell us that by following a specific procedure, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people would atone for the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf. Several analogies can be drawn between the golden calf and the Parah Adumah process. As the golden calf was burned in [fire](fire.html), so too was the Parah Adumah. As the golden calf was crushed to [dust](rock.html), so too was the Parah Adumah reduced to [dust](rock.html) and ashes. As the golden calf’s [dust](rock.html) was mixed with water, so too were Bne Israel commanded to mix the Parah Adumah’s [dust](rock.html) and ashes with water. As [three](three.html) thousand [Jews](gen-jew.html) died because of the golden calf, so too [three](three.html) different species: cedar wood, hyssop, and a red thread, were burned in the [fire](fire.html) of the Parah Adumah. As the golden calf made impure a pure [nation](nations.html), so too the Parah Adumah made impure a pure person who touches it. As the golden calf’s [dust](rock.html) [purified](purity.html) the people when Moshe forced the [Jews](gen-jew.html) to drink water mixed with its [dust](rock.html), so shall the Parah Adumah [purify](purity.html) an impure person. As the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf is preserved for all [generations](toldot.html), so too the water of the Parah Adumah may be used in all [generations](toldot.html).

# XI. [Clean](purity.html) vs. Unclean

On the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) after [Purim](Purim.html), [two](two.html) [Torah Scroll](letters.html)s are removed from the [Ark](ark.html). The sidrah of the week is read from the [first](one.html), and from the second, the chapter of Parah Adumah, the Red Cow (or Red Heifer), is read. It gives the procedure through which people can [purify](purity.html) themselves from the contamination caused by a human corpse.

The reading of this chapter was instituted for this [time](time.html) of the year because [Jews](gen-jew.html) were required to [purify](purity.html) themselves before [coming](coming.html) to [Jerusalem](city.html) for the pilgrimage [festival](festival.html) of [Passover](passover.html).

The Ashlamata read on the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) of Parashat Parah contains the verse, “And I shall sprinkle pure water upon you, that you be cleansed. From all your contamination and from all your filth I will cleanse you”.[[17]](#footnote-17) There are other parallels in the Ashlamata between the concepts of [sin](sin.html) represented by contamination, and [atonement](atonemen.html) represented by [purity](purity.html).

This idea is discussed in the commentary to the ArtScroll Ezekiel (pp.534-5), as follows: [Freedom](freedom.html) of will in moral matters is the [first](one.html) and irreplaceable condition for living [one](one.html)’s life on the higher plane demanded by the Torah. Belief in man’s [freedom](freedom.html) of action, however, is endangered by the fact that man cannot avoid death and that he is subject to the superficial limitations imposed by the forces of nature.

This belief is particularly shaken by the sight of a dead human being. If the whole human being has succumbed to death, been overpowered by [physical](physical.html) forces, If man, like all other organic beings, cannot escape the spell of an overpowering force, then there is no room for the moral “you shall” next to the [physical](physical.html) “you must.” Moral [freedom](freedom.html) of will would then be an illusion, and the Divine [law](law.html) of morality with its demand for total free-willed devotion to the illuminating, purifying [fire](fire.html) of its [sanctuary](mikdash.html) would be incomprehensible.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Thus, [sin](sin.html) is related not only to death, but also to contamination, which is closely associated with death. Because the sinner is shackled by his [desires](needs.html), he loses [spiritual](physical.html) control of actions. He is swept along by the [physical](physical.html) lusts that have overpowered his [spiritual](physical.html) self. Thus, the most meaningful part of life, the [spiritual](physical.html), has been killed. For this reason, when G-d forgives man’s [sin](sin.html) and grants him a [new](new.html) [heart](body.html) and a [new](new.html) spirit, He is imbuing him with [purity](purity.html), the state of mind in which man is the sole master of his actions.

A living (and therefore a pure) person uses his [body](body.html) as he wills; it is his tool to use as he sees fit. The regenerate sinner, upon returning to the state of [purity](purity.html), joins once more the state of the living, and the free.[[19]](#footnote-19)

As with the other of the [Four](four.html) Parashiot,[[20]](#footnote-20) a boy who is not yet of Bar-[Mitzva](cmds613.html) age should not be called to the Torah for Maftir on [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Parshat Parah, nor should he read the Parshah for others. For since he is free of the obligation of [mitzvot](cmds613.html), he cannot enable others to fulfill their obligation through him.

# XII. The Haftarah

PARSHAT PARAH Yehezchel 36:16-38

This Ashlamata, which we read in conjunction with Parshat Parah, predicts the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people’s ultimate state of [spiritual](physical.html) [purity](purity.html). The prophet Yehezchel addresses the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html) and says in the [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), “I will sprinkle pure waters upon you and you will be cleansed from all your impurities and repulsiveness”.[[21]](#footnote-21) These words refer to our final [stages](stages.html) of purification wherein we will be totally cleansed from [sin](sin.html). Yehezchel compares this purification to a purification process from [spiritual](physical.html) uncleanness. Careful analysis of this will reveal a significant dimension of this [purity](purity.html). Instead of comparing this purification to the traditional immersion process the prophet compares it to the waters of the red heifer. This particular procedure was reserved for [one](one.html) who came in contact with a corpse. Such contact transmitted severe ritual uncleanness, which required a unique purification process for its removal. This particular comparison suggests a corollary between [one](one.html)’s association with [sin](sin.html) and association with death. Apparently, our [spiritual](physical.html) state of [purity](purity.html) from [sin](sin.html) is likened to the ritual state of [purity](purity.html) from death.

In order to appreciate this similarity it is necessary to examine the unique nature of the red heifer service. In this week’s maftir portion we read about the sacrificial service of the red heifer and its unique details and regulations. This [sacrifice](korbanot.html) was limited to a perfectly red cow, which had never worn a yoke. Unlike all sacrifices the slaughtering of the heifer took place outside the walls of the Bait HaMikdash. The [blood](body.html) was not offered on the [Temple](temple.html) alter but instead on [Mount of Olives](east.html), facing the [Temple](temple.html). The entire heifer was burned and the ashes were mixed with spring water yielding the ritual mixture. This mixture was then sprinkled on all who came in contact with a corpse and ritual [purity](purity.html) was achieved. Chazal[[22]](#footnote-22) comment on the unusual nature of this [sacrifice](korbanot.html) and reveal that it atoned for the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf. The redness of the cow reflected the redness of [sin](sin.html) and the lack of yoke represented the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people’s lack of recognition of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s sovereignty. The [sacrifice](korbanot.html) itself was repeated whenever a [new](new.html) supply of ashes was necessary indicating the necessity for constant [atonement](atonemen.html) from this grave [sin](sin.html).

The above [insight](insights.html) reveals that purification from death can only be achieved through [atonement](atonemen.html) for the [sin](sin.html) of the golden calf. It stands to reason therefore that ritual [impurity](purity.html) generated by death is directly related to the [spiritual](physical.html) [impurity](purity.html) caused by the golden calf. Apparently the [spiritual](physical.html) impact of this [sin](sin.html) was so powerful that it created an ongoing effect on the ritual [purity](purity.html) status of every [Jew](gen-jew.html). This intriguing phenomenon can be understood through the profound words of Chazal.[[23]](#footnote-23) The [Talmud](orallaw.html) [teaches](teacher.html) us that when the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people received the Torah at Har [Sinai](stages.html) they were released from the curse of mortality and became eternal beings. Their superhuman commitment and love for [HaShem](hashem.html) was so intense that it actually transformed their [physical](physical.html) being into a semi [spiritual](physical.html) [one](one.html). During those elevated days, their [bodies](body.html) corresponded with their [spiritual](physical.html) drives and contributed to their perfect service of [HaShem](hashem.html). Even the cravings and urges of the [body](body.html) translated into perfect [spiritual](physical.html) pursuits which elevated the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people beyond our human comprehension.

We now return to the ritual sprinkling process and to the [sacrifice](korbanot.html) of the red heifer. The *Sefer HaChinuch*[[24]](#footnote-24) shares with us why association with death produces ritual uncleanness. He explains that when [one](one.html) passes away and his soul leaves the [body](body.html) nothing remains behind besides a [physical](physical.html) shell. Now, barren of any trace of spirituality the [body](body.html) reflects the image of vanity. It now represents all [one](one.html)’s earthly urges and cravings and identifies with all his sinful practices of life.

When [one](one.html) comes in contact with this vain, sinful entity a degree of [spiritual](physical.html) [impurity](purity.html) is transmitted. As we have now discovered, this identity and association stems back to the shameful plunge of the golden calf. It was then that the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [body](body.html) reverted to its [physical](physical.html) state which now produces ritual uncleanness after [one](one.html)’s death. Therefore, [atonement](atonemen.html) for the [sin](sin.html) of the calf is actually a prerequisite of ritual [purity](purity.html). [One](one.html) must [first](one.html) recognize the severe repercussions of straying from the ways of [HaShem](hashem.html) and seeking alternate approaches to life. Detaching oneself from [HaShem](hashem.html) will result in a severe [spiritual](physical.html) decline which accents mortality. Following this, as was the case for the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, [one](one.html) will succumb to his [physical](physical.html) urges and cravings and plunge into [sin](sin.html). Understandably, [atonement](atonemen.html) from the influence of these drives qualifies [one](one.html) for purification from the ritual [impurity](purity.html) caused by these very same drives. The [atonement](atonemen.html) waters produced by this [sacrifice](korbanot.html) [purify](purity.html) [one](one.html) from the impurities of his barren [physical](physical.html) entity. This results in a proper appreciation of his true entity, the harmonious unit of [body](body.html) and soul.

We now understand the corollary between our purification from the effects of death and our ultimate state of [purity](purity.html). In describing our ultimate [purity](purity.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) says, “And I shall give you a [new](new.html) [heart](body.html) and I will place a [new](new.html) spirit in your midst and remove the stone [heart](body.html) from your flesh”.[[25]](#footnote-25) Ramchal in [*Daat*](daat.html) *Tevunot*[[26]](#footnote-26) explains that these words refer to the lifting of the curse of mortality. Our [future](future.html) appreciation of spirituality will have such an impact that it will virtually return us to the lofty state of spirituality. At that point, even our [physical](physical.html) drives will be completely focused on [HaShem](hashem.html) allowing no trace of [sin](sin.html) to exist. In essence, these very same waters which presently [purify](purity.html) us from our contact with vanity will ultimately remove the entire curse of vanity from us. This ultimate purification will reflect such interest in [HaShem](hashem.html) that it will literally transform us unto eternal [spiritual](physical.html) beings. May we [merit](merit.html) this development in our very own days!

# XIII. A Chok

The [laws](law.html) surrounding the Parah Adumah are called chukim, decrees without apparent logical explanations. Other [laws](law.html) are called mishpatim, [laws](law.html) that are apparently logical or sensible, such as “Thou Shall Not Commit Murder”.

Everyone has had difficulties understanding the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of someone who is impure due to contact with a corpse, which is effected through the ashes of the Parah Adumah. About King Solomon who says:

***Kohelet 7:23*** *All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be rise; but it was far off from me.*

R. [Yitzchak](isaac.html) says “Solomon said, I have understood the entire Torah, and this section about the Parah Adumah, from the [time](time.html) that I touched it, I have inquired into it, delved into it, probed it”.[[27]](#footnote-27)

The reasons for the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of Parah Adumah have always been beyond the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of even the wisest scholars. In particular, it is a mystery how it purifies an impure person while at the same [time](time.html) rendering a pure person impure. The Torah does, however, give us certain hints in this regard. A parable is brought: [one](one.html) day, the little son of the maid, while playing, dirtied the spotless floor of the palace. “Where is this boy’s mother?” cried the king. “Let her come here and [clean](purity.html) up her son’s mess”. Similarly, let the Parah Adumah come and [clean](purity.html) up for the golden calf.

The ritual of purification using the Ashes of the Red Heifer is [one](one.html) of the least understood of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [commandments](cmds613.html). Though these ashes were necessary to cleanse anyone entering the [Temple](temple.html), even the wise Solomon confessed that this was a riddle far from him. According to the [Midrash](orallaw.html),[[28]](#footnote-28) when King Solomon wrote, “I said I would acquire wisdom, but it is far from me”,[[29]](#footnote-29) he was alluding to his inability to comprehend some of the profound paradoxes involved in the [commandment](cmds613.html) of the Red Heifer. This [connection](connection.html) is verified in his use of the words vehi rechokah, which have the same gematria (441) as the words “Parah Adumah”, red heifer!

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch gives a complete straightforward explanation of this in his commentary on [Numbers](nchart.html) 19. Before making [three](three.html) supportive comments I will briefly explain Rav Hirsch’s 50 page commentary: Rav Hirsch claims that the Parah Adumah [teaches](teacher.html) us that: “All of us have a right to be bullish (=Parah) in our life aspirations. Our consequent passions (=complete redness) can be prevented from leading to [sin](sin.html) (Chatat=[sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot)) if we direct our life force (=[blood](body.html)) towards [spiritual](physical.html) acts (=[seven](seven.html) sprinkles towards [temple](temple.html)). When a person partially loses his drive to produce in life because of his exposure to death(=Toomath Mayth) we cure him (=Taharah) by reminding him (=sprinkling) that he is both [spiritual](physical.html)(=water) and animal(=Parah ashes)”.

Rav Hirsch continues to show how the Parah Adumah deals with our quest for [freedom](freedom.html). I recommend reading the fifty pages in detail. Let me now make [three](three.html) further supportive points:

1) Rav Hirsch did not INVENT his symbolic methods. Rather they are based on his [one](one.html) hundred page essay “Towards a Groundline of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Symbolism” in which he asks, “Can we interpret [mitzvot](cmds613.html) symbolically?”, “Should we?”, “If yes how are we to do it?” So they are objective.

2) If Parah Adumah has a reason why is it called a *Chok*, which is erroneously translated as “without reason”? Actually, “Chok” simply means “deep reason”. Let me give an analogy: “Don’t play in the snow without a coat” has a transparent reason (since I will probably get [sick](illness.html) immediately) while “Don’t [eat](eating.html) salt because you might get high [blood](body.html) pressure” has a “deep reason” (i.e. its [consequences](conseq.html) are not immediate but DO come).

3) Finally to quote Rav Yonah on Pirke Avot (“we do not understand the suffering of the righteous”) “We of course [know](daat.html) the reason people suffer (because of their [sins](sin.html)) but it is not as easily acceptable as most reasons.” I would say the same thing here for King Solomon.

# XIV. The Meaning of the Materials

Ash generally endures. The ash of the Parah Adumah symbolizes the principle of enduring life.

To the ash of the Parah Adumah cedar-wood and hyssop were added. Cedar-wood is a symbol of endurance and used as such in the construction of the [Temple](temple.html) in [Jerusalem](city.html), an enduring holy place. Hyssop is a symbol of purification. Since it was used for the smearing of [blood](body.html) on the door posts of the Israelite houses on the night of the [exodus](exodus.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html), we may infer that hyssop was thought to open up blocked passages for the inflow of purifying energies. In Egypt this ensured that the [angel](angels.html) of death did not enter the [household](househld.html) carrying the symbol. The addition of cedar-wood and hyssop to the mix reinforced the impression in the minds of the people that the waters of purification opened up the blocked passages, preventing tumah = decay, and rendering the person free from impurities.

# XV. Shamayim - [Heavens](heaven.html)

What is ohna, Shamayim?

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:8*** *And G-d called the firmament “Shamayim” (*[*Heaven*](heaven.html)*). And the evening and the morning were the second day.*

Rashi explains that the [Heavens](heaven.html) were actually created from an admixture of [fire](fire.html) and water:

ohna Shamayim = at Aish *+* ohn Mayim

Shamayim ([Heavens](heaven.html)) = Aish ([fire](fire.html)) + Mayim (waters)

The symbols of water and [fire](fire.html) are often used to indicate the presence of [HaShem](hashem.html). In the wilderness, the presence of [HaShem](hashem.html) was manifest during the day by a pillar of [cloud](important.html), the water, and at night by a pillar of [fire](fire.html). The ability for [fire](fire.html) and water to exist in harmony is an act of [HaShem](hashem.html). Only [HaShem](hashem.html) can bring this shalom between opposites.

[Yosef](joseph.html) HaTzaddik was an amalgamation of diverse character traits. On [one](one.html) [hand](fourteen.html), he manifested “Gevurah” (strict justice and strength), as the pasuk says:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:2***[*Yosef*](joseph.html) *brought evil reports about his brothers.*

On the other [hand](fourteen.html), [Yosef](joseph.html) was capable of great Chesed, loving-kindness, as [Yosef](joseph.html) confided in the [angel](angels.html) [Gabriel](angels.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:16*** *I seek the fraternity of my brothers.*

[Yosef](joseph.html) was the fierce dictator of Egypt, as the pasuk describes:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 42:6***[*Yosef*](joseph.html) *was the ‘shalit’ (in absolute control).*

This was another display of Gevurah, strength. Simultaneously, he fed and nurtured the entire civilized [world](worlds.html), “He was the provider”, an indication of his extreme Chesed, loving-kindness. This dichotomy fascinated Paro and precipitated [Yosef](joseph.html)’s rise to power. This is what Paro meant when he said:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 41:38*** *Can we find another like him, who possesses such an inward spirit of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*?*

[Yosef](joseph.html)’s external appearance was [one](one.html) of pampering and [physical](physical.html) indulgence. Therefore, when Paro discovered his hidden prophetic and [spiritual](physical.html) powers, he reacted with fascination. How can [one](one.html) embody qualities that are so diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive?

The Parah Adumah, the red cow, is the perfect picture of Shamayim. The waters of the Parah Adumah are also Aish ([fire](fire.html)) + Mayim (waters). These ashes bring shalom between [HaShem](hashem.html) and those who have come in contact with the dead – truly these are [two](two.html) opposites!

Once we understand the purpose of the ashes of the Red Cow, we can appreciate that [Yeshua](yeshua.html), [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html), had contracted tumah, uncleanness, by His contact with the dead (Himself) and his contact with a grave. When [His Majesty](yeshua.html) ascended through the [seven](seven.html) [heavens](heaven.html), He was being sprinkled [seven](seven.html) times with Shamayim = Aish + Mayim! Aish ([fire](fire.html)) + Mayim (waters). When [His Majesty](yeshua.html) returned from the [Heavens](heaven.html), He was again sprinkled [seven](seven.html) times. The Torah requires that [one](one.html) who has come in contact with the dead or a grave must be sprinkled [seven](seven.html) times on the [third](three.html) day and [seven](seven.html) times on the [seventh](seven.html) day. After he immerses in the [mikveh](forty.html), he no longer has tumah and has become tahor ([clean](purity.html)).

This repetitious use of [seven](seven.html) is the pattern in the [Midrash](orallaw.html) as well:

**Pesiqta deRab Kahana, Midrashic Homilies for** [**Shabbat**](sabbath.html) **Parah Adumah, Pisqa V:2 -** R. Hanan bar Pazzi interpreted the cited verse [*The sayings of the Lord are pure sayings* (Ps. 12:7)] to apply to the pericope of the Red Cow, which contains [seven](seven.html) times [seven](seven.html) [references to matters of purification, thus:] [seven](seven.html) times is the red cow mentioned, [seven](seven.html) times the burning, [seven](seven.html) times the sprinkling, [seven](seven.html) times the laundering of garments, [seven](seven.html) times the matter of uncleanness, [seven](seven.html) times the matter of cleanness, [seven](seven.html) times the matter of [priests](priests.html). And if someone should say to you that in fact they are lacking [in not mentioning the [priests](priests.html) [seven](seven.html) times,] say to him, “Moses and Aaron count.” *Now the Lord said to Moses and to Aaron, ‘This is the statute of the* [*law*](law.html) *which the Lord has commanded* (Num. 19:1-13, pass.).

By ascending through the Shamayim, [His Majesty](yeshua.html) was being [purified](purity.html) so that there might be shalom between Himself and [HaShem](hashem.html).

Thus we can see the [connection](connection.html) between [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTzaddik and [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html). As [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David, [His majesty](yeshua.html) will truly encompass the character opposites that were displayed in [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTzaddik.

# XVI. Messianic Aspect

In this section I would like to examine the role of the ashes of the red heifer as they apply to [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

Since [Yeshua](yeshua.html) came into contact with a dead [body](body.html) (His own) on [Nisan](feasts.html) 14, He would not have been allowed to enter either the earthly nor the heavenly [Temple](temple.html).

The Torah is clear on the procedures to cleanse the [one](one.html) who has touched a dead [body](body.html) or a grave:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 19:1-22***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said to Moses and Aaron: "This is a requirement of the* [*law*](law.html) *that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke. Give it to Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html)*; it is to be taken outside the* [*camp*](stages.html) *and slaughtered in his presence. Then Eleazar the* [*priest*](priests.html) *is to take some of its* [*blood*](body.html) *on his finger and sprinkle it* [*seven*](seven.html) *times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. While he watches, the heifer is to be burned--its hide, flesh,* [*blood*](body.html) *and offal. The* [*priest*](priests.html) *is to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. After that, the* [*priest*](priests.html) *must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water. He may then come into the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, but he will be ceremonially unclean till evening. The man who burns it must also wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he too will be unclean till evening. "A man who is* [*clean*](purity.html) *shall* [*gather*](gather.html) *up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially* [*clean*](purity.html) *place outside the* [*camp*](stages.html)*. They shall be kept by the Israelite* [*community*](community.html) *for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from* [*sin*](sin.html)*. The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. This will be a lasting ordinance both for the Israelites and for the* [*aliens*](aliens.html) *living among them. "Whoever touches the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of anyone will be unclean for* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. He must* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself with the water on the* [*third*](three.html) *day and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day; then he will be* [*clean*](purity.html)*. But if he does not* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself on the* [*third*](three.html) *and* [*seventh*](seven.html) *days, he will not be* [*clean*](purity.html)*. Whoever touches the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of anyone and fails to* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself defiles* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*. That person must be cut off from Israel. Because the water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean; his uncleanness remains on him. "This is the* [*law*](law.html) *that applies when a person dies in a tent: Anyone who enters the tent and anyone who is in it will be unclean for* [*seven*](seven.html) *days, And every open container without a lid fastened on it will be unclean. "Anyone out in the open who touches someone who has been killed with a sword or someone who has died a natural death, or anyone who touches a human bone or a grave, will be unclean for* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. "For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification* [*offering*](korbanot) *into a jar and pour fresh water over them. Then a man who is ceremonially* [*clean*](purity.html) *is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there. He must also sprinkle anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave or someone who has been killed or someone who has died a natural death. The man who is* [*clean*](purity.html) *is to sprinkle the unclean person on the* [*third*](three.html) *and* [*seventh*](seven.html) *days, and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he is to* [*purify*](purity.html) *him. The person being cleansed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and that evening he will be* [*clean*](purity.html)*. But if a person who is unclean does not* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself, he must be cut off from the* [*community*](community.html)*, because he has defiled the* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. The water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on him, and he is unclean. This is a lasting ordinance for them. "The man who sprinkles the water of cleansing must also wash his clothes, and anyone who touches the water of cleansing will be unclean till evening. Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean till evening."*

Now, since [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was unclean because He had come into contact with both a dead [body](body.html) and a grave, we [know](daat.html) that the requirements of the Torah demand that He be sprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer and immerse in the [mikveh](forty.html) on the [third](three.html) and the [seventh](seven.html) days.

It is also worth noting that the ashes of the red heifer are a picture of a greater reality. What is that greater reality? To answer this question, it is instructive to note the Master’s words:

***Yochanan (John) 20:17*** [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

This [sod](sod.html) level passage speaks in a confusing manner. What does “ascending to my Father” have to do with the Torah requirements? Nowhere does the Torah [command](cmds613.html) that a man should ascend to [HaShem](hashem.html) before he can be touched! What is going on here?

Death requires the ashes of the red heifer and [mikveh](forty.html) on the 3rd and 7th day, according to the Torah:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 19:9-12*** *And a man [that is]* [*clean*](purity.html) *shall* [*gather*](gather.html) *up the ashes of the heifer, and lay [them] up without the* [*camp*](stages.html) *in a* [*clean*](purity.html) *place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it [is] a purification for* [*sin*](sin.html)*. And he that* [*gathered*](gather.html) *the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute forever. He that toucheth the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of any man shall be unclean* [*seven*](seven.html) *days. He shall* [*purify*](purity.html) *himself with it on the* [*third*](three.html) *day, and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall be* [*clean*](purity.html)*: but if he* [*purify*](purity.html) *not himself the* [*third*](three.html) *day, then the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day he shall not be* [*clean*](purity.html)*.*

This washing for death, and by intimation for [sleep](mashal.html), is also found in:

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*** *For the Lord himself shall descend from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *shall rise* [*first*](one.html)*: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Here we see both [heaven](heaven.html) and clouds. It bears repeating that [*heaven*](heaven.html) is called shamayim (***שמים***) in [Hebrew](hebrew.html). Shamayim is made up of [two](two.html) words, according to the [Gemara](orallaw.html):

***Chagigah 12a*** *What does ‘*[*heaven*](heaven.html)*’ [Shamayim] mean? R. Jose b. Hanina said: It means, ‘There is water’.[[30]](#footnote-30) In a Baraitha it is* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: [It means], ‘*[*fire*](fire.html) *and water’;[[31]](#footnote-31) this* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, brought them and mixed[[32]](#footnote-32) them* [*one*](one.html) *with the other and made from them the firmament.*

Aish - אש = [fire](fire.html)

Mayim - מים = water

Passing through the [seven](seven.html) [heavens](heaven.html) is the reality typified by the ashes of the red heifer (red = [fire](fire.html), ashes = the result of [fire](fire.html)) which are mixed with water (Mayim) and sprinkled on those who have come in contact with the dead or with a grave. When our Master died both his [body](body.html) and spirit were unclean because of death, but as he ascended through the [heavens](heaven.html) to present himself to the father, the [*heavens*](heaven.html) (Shamayim) themselves acted as the waters of purification of the Red Heifer which consist as well of [fire](fire.html) and water mixed together. So passing through the [seven](seven.html) [heavens](heaven.html) is the same as being sprinkled by the ashes of the red heifer.[[33]](#footnote-33) This is the greater reality!

After the sprinkling with the ashes of the red heifer, the [one](one.html) who came in contact with the dead must be immersed in the [mikveh](forty.html). (In John 20:26, we see that after [eight](eight.html) days [Yeshua](yeshua.html) invited people to touch Him because He was now [clean](purity.html).)

Further, the [cloud](important.html) that the righteous are “in” is clearly an allusion to the [mikveh](forty.html) (ritual immersion - baptism):

***I Corinthians 10:2*** *And were all baptized unto Moses in the* [*cloud*](important.html) *and in the sea;*

So, those who have died, according to I Thessalonians 4:16-17, are given the same treatment by [HaShem](hashem.html) as the Torah required of all who came in contact with the dead.

Why are the ashes of the red heifer used for those who come in contact with a grave? I understand why they [purify](purity.html) [one](one.html) who comes into contact with a dead [body](body.html), but why a grave?

[One](one.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) words for a grave is *Kever*. Curiously, Kever is also the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for a [womb](thebirth.html). What does a [*womb*](thebirth.html) have in common with a *grave*?

The answer is quite amazing! Both the [womb](thebirth.html) and the grave are a portal to and from another [world](worlds.html). Through this portal, this Kever, a soul enters a [body](body.html), and through the portal, this Kever, a soul returns to the [world](worlds.html) it came from. When a soul is born, the mother must be [purified](purity.html) according to the Torah, because she came into contact with a person [coming](coming.html) through the portal (the mother came in contact with the portal – her [womb](thebirth.html)). When a person dies, the grave becomes his soul’s portal to return. Those who come into contact with the portal must be [purified](purity.html). The purification from contact with a grave is more severe than from childbirth. So, a [new](new.html) mother is [purified](purity.html) through the [mikveh](forty.html) while those who come into contact with a grave are [purified](purity.html) by the ashes of the red heifer and the [mikveh](forty.html).

# XVII. Understanding the *Parah Adumah*

A *chok* (or *chukim* in the plural) in the Torah is a straightforward [commandment](cmds613.html) from [HaShem](hashem.html) to people. Traditionally, we are meant to understand that *chukim* are not [*mitzvot*](cmds613.html) we can explain – and the archetype of all *chukim* is the red heifer, the *Parah Adumah*.

It is, at least at [first](one.html) glance, a very difficult [commandment](cmds613.html) to understand. Why should a red heifer that has never been yoked, be slaughtered and burned, and its ashes used to [purify](purity.html) those who have been in contact with a dead human [body](body.html)?

The answer, like the Torah itself, is within our grasp. We start by reviewing the purpose of purification in the [first](one.html) place.

Ritual purification is not, in itself, holiness. Purification is nothing more or less than a preparatory step for doing something in holiness, women go the [*mikveh*](forty.html) before [joining with their husband](marriageact.html)s in an act of potential biological [creation](bara.html), for example. The Torah is full of [*mitzvot*](cmds613.html)requiring such [purity](purity.html), especially when approaching or serving in [Hashem](hashem.html)’s house on earth, the [*Mishkan*](mikdash.html).

So for almost every kind of [impurity](purity.html), the Torah tells us to immerse ourselves in the [*mikveh*](forty.html), and we are then ready to spend the rest of our day doing [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [commandments](cmds613.html) to connect with the [spiritual](physical.html) side of the [world](worlds.html). But not for the worst kind of [impurity](purity.html): contact with a dead human [body](body.html). For that [impurity](purity.html), immersion in a [mikveh](forty.html) will not suffice. To serve [HaShem](hashem.html) in His house after contact with the dead, we must be sprinkled with the ash of the *Parah Adumah*, combined with water: the Torah calls it *Mayim Chayim*, usually translated as “spring water”, but literally it means “living water”.

And herein lies the [first](one.html) break in the case. The [name](name.html) for the P*arah Adumah* is “red heifer”. The color red represents [blood](body.html), the essence of the life force itself. And *Adumah*, “red”, shares the very same root word as “land” and indeed “[Adam](adam.html)” the [first](one.html) man. Nothing in the Torah is a coincidence! And neither is the fact that the word for ashes that the heifer is turned into, *affar*, is spelled “ayin-peh-reish - עפר” when the ashes are sprinkled on someone to remove the impurification of a dead person.

Consider: if the [*mikveh*](forty.html) is to return to a ground state in **place**, then the red heifer is a way of returning to a ground state in both place **and** [**time**](time.html). [Time](time.html) is important, of course, because every living thing was once alive, if we could but dial back the clock to before there was any death in the [world](worlds.html), when everything was alive. And the [*mitzva*](cmds613.html) of the *Parah Adumah* allows for precisely this to take place.

This is why the animal must never have been yoked. In order to take the person back to the [time](time.html) before death, to the moment of the [creation](bara.html) of mankind itself, we must recreate the [world](worlds.html) of the [sixth](six.html) day of [creation](bara.html). In the moment that [Adam](adam.html) was created, animals were free from the yoke of humanity.

[HaShem](hashem.html) made the [first](one.html) man, [Adam](adam.html), by taking ashes from the earth, and blowing the soul of life into his [body](body.html). But note the language. G-d makes [Adam](adam.html) from *affar*, spelled “ayin-peh-reish”. And then he blows *Chayim* (life) into his nostrils.

In the case of the *Parah Adumah*, we also take the ashes from the earth (for the animal’s very [name](name.html) contains “earth”), and we combine those ashes with *Mayim Chayim* which we can now translate as “living water.” When we use the ashes and water to restore the [purity](purity.html) of a person who has touched a corpse, we are doing nothing less than recreating the fundamental act of mankind’s [creation](bara.html), taking us back to the [time](time.html) before death!

P.S. [One](one.html) of the most famous questions asked by our Sages is why the [priest](priests.html) who sprinkles the ashes becomes impure, *tamei*, in the process. There must be hundreds of proposed answers to this question. The above explanation would provide another: human acts of profound [creation](bara.html), *Briah* always leaves the person committing the act in an impure state. Sprinkling the ashes and water is like recreating [*Adam*](adam.html) *HaRishon*, and it is an act of [creation](bara.html) similar to human [intercourse](marriageact.html). Both acts require *taharah* ([purity](purity.html) – cleanness) in preparation, and both leave the actors *b’tamei* (unclean) after the fact.

Why is this so? My guess is that every human act of [creation](bara.html) leaves a whiff of what-might-have-been. We are imperfect, and so when we create, we always leave some potential [creation](bara.html) uncreated. Such a missed opportunity is, in its own way, a shadow of death, of failure. Yet we are not commanded to avoid *tumah*; it, like failure, is an unavoidable byproduct of a productive life.

# XVIII. Conclusion

It will never be possible to remove the mosques that are on the [Temple](temple.html) Mount in [Jerusalem](city.html) and to build the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) in their place except after the site and the builders etc. have been ritually [purified](purity.html) by the mixture of the ashes of the red cow, which must be slaughtered in a ritually [clean](purity.html) site. Since no such sites are [known](daat.html) to us today, we would need the mixture of the ashes of the red cow to prepare such a site.

The [laws](law.html) surrounding the Parah Adumah are called chukim, decrees without apparent logical. Other [laws](law.html) are called mishpatim, [laws](law.html) that are apparently logical or sensible, such as *Thou Shall Not Commit Murder*.

The regulations governing the Parah Adumah are introduced by the phrase: “This is the chukkat - the [law](law.html) of the Torah”.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The text does not read: This is the [law](law.html) about [impurity](purity.html) and [purity](purity.html). We may thus infer that all of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of the Torah should be observed as *chok*, of divine institution, irrespective whether we understand the reason for their observance or not. They must be kept, even if they are shrouded in mystery and do not appeal to logic.[[35]](#footnote-35) Hidden meaning underlies even the most obvious of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), and underpinning them all there is [one](one.html) fundamental principle, the lifestyle regulated by our minds influences our quality of life.

Finally, the ashes of the Red Heifer were lost in the period of the later Talmudic sages (Amaraim), during the [generation](toldot.html) of Abaya and Rava [who lived in the [Fifth](five.html) Century], as mentioned in the [Talmud](orallaw.html).[[36]](#footnote-36) This means that we require a Prophet to tell us where they are.

\* \* \*

[Passover](passover.html) [Nisan](feasts.html) Messianic

Day Date [Event](feasts.html)

--------------------------------------------------------------

0 14 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) [eats](eating.html) [Passover](passover.html) with His disciples.

1 15 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is in the grave. Day 1

2 16 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is in the grave. Day 2

3 17 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is in the grave. Day 3

4 18 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is resurrected. Day 1 of uncleanness. He does not want to be touched.

5 19 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is alive. Day 2 of uncleanness.

6 20 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is alive. Day 3 of uncleanness. Red heifer sprinkling.

7 21 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is alive. Day 4 of uncleanness.

22 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is alive. Day 5 of uncleanness.

23 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is alive. Day 6 of uncleanness.

24 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is alive. Day 7 of uncleanness. Red heifer sprinkling.

25 [Mashiach](mashiach.html) appears to disciples. He invites touching.

\* \* \*

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1. Chazal ([Hebrew](hebrew.html)) = Our Sages [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A mitzva is the observance of one of [HaShem’s](hashem.html) commands. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. the sacrificial lamb [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Even two black or white hairs invalidate it [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A sacrificial animal [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Tabernacle. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Written and Compiled by Rabbi Eliyahu Kane & Rabbi Reuven Subar. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bamidbar (Numbers) 19:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Based on the Talks of The Lubavitcher Rebbe [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Laws of the Red Heifer, Ch. III: end [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. As a keepsake [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Bamidbar (Numbers) 19:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This final exile is in Edom and thus the end of this exile depends on the Parah Adumah. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Bamidbar (Numbers) 20:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Haggadah Shel Bait Levi [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Hebrew: תמורה‎, literally: "exchange" [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 36:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. R. Hirsch, Numbers 19:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Chazon HaMikra [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. These are the four special readings that are read in the [synagogue](synagog.html) on the four of the [Sabbaths](sabbath.html) preceding [Passover](passover.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 36:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Rashi to Bamidbar 19:2 II [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Avodah Zarah 5a [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Mitzva 263 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. 36:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 3:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Yalkut Shimoni Chukkat 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Numbers Rabbah 19:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ecclesiastes 7:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. I.e. ***שמים*** is explained as a compound of שם (‘there’) and מים (‘water’). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. I.e. ***שמים*** is explained as a compound of אש (‘fire’) and מים (‘water’), the א of אש being omitted. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Lit., ‘mixed by beating’. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. I learned this from my [teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Bamidbar (Numbers) 19:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Toldot Avraham [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Chagigah 25a [↑](#footnote-ref-36)