

Chukat Numbers 19:1-22:1

Ordinance of

Rabbin/Dr. Deborah Brandt

Kvetch Kvetch Kvetch, Nothing but Complaints!

Haftorah Reading: Judges 11:1-33

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 19:1 The Red Heifer
- 20:1 Miriam's Death
- 20:3 The People Complain for Lack of Water and Against the Manna
- 20:7 YHVH Commands Moses to Bring Water from the Rock
- 20:9 Moses Sins by Striking the Rock and Is Punished by Not Being Permitted to Lead the Israelites into the Promised Land
- 20:23 Death of Aaron
- 21:1 Amalek Attacks the Israelites
- 21:4 The Israelites Murmur Again; Complaining About the Manna and Lack of Water
- 21:6 Fiery Serpents Attack the Complainers
- 21:8 Moses Constructs a Serpent on a Pole and the People Are Healed of the Venomous Bite

Introduction:

In this Torah portion we have several Ordinances given to Israel including the Red Heifer. We also see more of Israel's lack of faith and complaints.

We have the following occurrences:

- The Law Red Heifer
- Death of Miriam
- Punishment of Moses for striking the Rock
- The attack of the Amalekites
- The Fiery Serpent
- Death of Aaron

Moses is taught the laws of the **red heifer**, whose ashes purify a person who has been contaminated by contact with a dead body.

After **forty years** of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. **Miriam** dies, and the people thirst for **water**. G-d tells Moses to speak to a **rock** and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and **strikes** the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.

Aaron dies at Hor Hahar and is succeeded in the high priesthood by his son **Elazar**. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people "speak against G-d and Moses"; G-d tells Moses to place a **brass serpent** upon a high pole, and all who will gaze heavenward will be healed. The people sing a **song** in honor of the miraculous well that provided them water in the desert.

Moses leads the people in battles against the Amorite kings **Sichon and Og** (who seek to prevent Israel's passage through their territory) and conquers their lands, which lie **east of the Jordan**.
http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2959/jewish/Chukat-in-a-Nutshell.htm

Related and Key Words in Chukot

statute of = CHUKAT = חֻקֹּת

Related Words

law, decree, statute, ordinance, rule, regulation, custom, boundary	<i>chok</i>	חֹק
constitution, law, custom	<i>chukah</i>	חֻקָּה
immutable law (ordinance forever)	<i>chukat olam</i>	חֻקֵי עוֹלָם
legal, lawful, licit/illegal, unlawful, illicit	<i>chooki/lo-chooki</i>	חֻקֵי/לֹא-חֻקֵי
law-abiding (keeper of the law)	<i>shomer chok</i>	שׁוֹמֵר חֹק
international law (law among the peoples)	<i>chok ben-leumi</i>	חֹק בֵּין-לְעַמִּים
military law (law of army/host)	<i>chok ts' vae</i>	חֹק צְבָא

Key Words

Ordinance **H2708**

חֻקָּה

chû qqâ h

BDB Definition:

1) statute, ordinance, limit, enactment, something prescribed

1a) statute

Part of Speech: noun feminine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from [H2706](#)

Same Word by TWOT Number: 728b

Blemish **H3971**

m מוּם / מְאֻם

m'û m / mû

BDB Definition:

1) blemish, spot, defect

1a) of physical defect

1b) of moral stain

Part of Speech: noun masculine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: as if passive participle from an unused root

Same Word by TWOT Number: 1137a

Purification For Sins **H2403**

חַטָּאת / חַטֵּאת

chattâ 'â h / chattâ 'th

BDB Definition:

1) sin, sinful

2) sin, sin offering

2a) sin

2b) condition of sin, guilt of sin

2c) punishment for sin

2d) sin-offering

2e) purification from sins of ceremonial uncleanness

Part of Speech: noun feminine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from [H2398](#)

Same Word by TWOT Number: 638e

Sanctify **H6942**

שָׁדַשׁ

qâ dash

BDB Definition:

1) to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, be separate

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to be set apart, be consecrated

1a2) to be hallowed

1a3) consecrated, tabooed

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to show oneself sacred or majestic

1b2) to be honoured, be treated as sacred

1b3) to be holy

1c) (Piel)

1c1) to set apart as sacred, consecrate, dedicate

1c2) to observe as holy, keep sacred

1c3) to honour as sacred, hallow

1c4) to consecrate

1d) (Pual)

1d1) to be consecrated

1d2) consecrated, dedicated

1e) (Hiphil)

1e1) to set apart, devote, consecrate

1e2) to regard or treat as sacred or hallow

1e3) to consecrate

1f) (Hithpael)

1f1) to keep oneself apart or separate

1f2) to cause Himself to be hallowed (of God)

1f3) to be observed as holy

1f4) to consecrate oneself

Part of Speech: verb

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: a primitive root

Same Word by TWOT Number: 1990

Once again, Israel shows their lack of trust in the one who had brought them so far.

Num 20:1 And the people of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. **And Miriam died there and was buried there.**

Miriam died towards the end of the desert wanderings, and like her brothers did not reach the Promised Land. She is spoken of as one of the three good leaders of Israel; and to her merit was due the Well, which, according to the legend, accompanied the children of Israel as long as she lived – Dr. J.H Hertz

Kvetching – We Have No Water

Num 20:2 Now there was no water for the congregation. **And they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.**

Num 20:3 And the people quarreled with Moses and said, "**Would that we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD!**

Num 20:4 Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, **that we should die here, both we and our cattle?**

Num 20:5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is no place for grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink."

How quickly we forget what God has done for us the minute we are faced with a test of our faith. We need to realize that this was not just a group of 100 people complaining, this was the whole camp of Israel. Various estimates are from 1 to 2 million people, to get an idea of the size, I live in Chicago where the latest census shows a population within the city limits of 2,695,598. This is a huge amount of people to have to govern and lead. Now you have them once again complaining against God that they were better off in Egypt.

Plagues indicate that the exodus population was very large (1-2 million):

There are several examples of where God killed large numbers of the Israelites because they were sinning and in rebellion to His revealed moral laws through Moses. 40,700 Israelites were killed within the first two years after leaving Egypt. Then another 24,000 just before they entered the promised land. This is most troubling for those who suggest the entire exodus population was about 20,000. The large number of deaths are consistent with a very large population. Let's see how many times Israel has tested God and paid the price via God's righteous judgement in the chart below.

From this we can see what a great leader Moses was in the face of leading a large group of people who could only see what was in front of their faces.

However to be fair, how many of us have done the same thing. God has provided our needs time after time, but the minute we are faced by a test we complain and are in fear that He will not take care of us. We can see where Moses came to the end of his patience with our people. You would think that they would have learned by past experience that God is faithful and has not

brought them into the Wilderness to die, but to prepare them to be His people and to learn how to worship and serve Him.

Plagues Summary Chart		
3000 killed by Levites	Golden Calf at Sinai	Exodus 32:28
23,000 killed by God	Golden Calf at Sinai	Exodus 32:35 + 1 Cor 10:8
14,700 killed by God	Kadesh Barnea	Numbers 16:49
24,000 killed by God	At Shittim near Jordan	Numbers 25:9
many people killed by God	Zered river	Numbers 21:6

1. At Kadesh Barnea: "But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah." Numbers 16:49
2. At Shittim, just before crossing the Jordan: "Those who died by the plague were 24,000." Numbers 25:9
3. Golden Calf at Sinai: "So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about 3000 men of the people fell that day." Exodus 32:28
4. Golden Calf at Sinai: "Then the Lord smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made." Exodus 32:35
5. Golden Calf at Sinai: "Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and 23,000 thousand fell in one day." 1 Corinthians 10:8
6. In the Zered Wady valley after leaving Kadesh Barnea for the promised land: "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died." Numbers 21:6

The Cost of Disobedience

Num 20:6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them,

Moses & Aaron did what they always did, fell on his face before God to intercede for his people and bring their requests to Him.

Num 20:7 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num 20:8 "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, **and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water.** So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle."

Num 20:9 And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

Num 20:10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?"

Num 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

Num 20:12 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, **therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.**"

Num 20:13 **These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy.**

Waters of Meribah, ie. The waters of strife.

"Over and over again Scripture brings out, on the one hand, the fickleness of the people, their murmurings, mutinies, vehement repentance, and woeful self-assertion; and on the other hand the marvelous constancy of Moses-his humility, faithfulness, generosity and his sublime patience. Once only was his mighty spirit unable to stand the strain. The meaning of "ye believed no in Me" (v 12) does not make it quite clear whether the sin was a momentary presumptuousness or disobedience to the Divine command. It is but a single blot in his career, and in any other man would have been unnoticed. "Judaism teaches that the greater the man, the stricter the consequent guilt and punishment, if there is a falling away from the standard (S.R. Hirsh). For this sin, recorded in this chapter, Moses forfeits his right to enter the Promised Land." Dr. J.H. Hertz

Dr. Hertz also comments *"Carried away by anger, Moses still further forgot himself, and instead of speaking to the rock, as he had been commanded, he struck it twice. Had he merely spoken to the rock, the miracle would have been undeniable, and God's Name would then have been sanctified in the eyes of the unbelieving multitude."*

Here we see the great danger of reacting in anger towards people, and not allowing anger to be controlled. Many people have anger issues in their lives and because of this God cannot trust them to lead His people. Because of anger, we miss the mark and fail to enter into the blessings He has for us. We might be the a great teacher, leader and successful in many areas of our lives, however anger can cause irreparable damage to the lives of others as well as our own lives.

Pro 14:29 One who is slow to **anger** shows great understanding, but a quick-tempered one exalts folly.

Pro 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up **anger**.

Pro 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but one who is slow to **anger** calms a quarrel.

Pro 16:32 Better to be slow to **anger** than a mighty warrior. One who controls his temper is better than one who conquers a city.

Pro 19:11 Prudence makes one slow to **anger** and his glory is to overlook an offense.

Pro 22:24 Do not be friends with one given to **anger** or associate with a hot-tempered person,

Eph 4:26 "Be angry, yet do not sin." Do not let the sun go down on your **anger**,

Eph 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness and rage and **anger** and quarreling and slander, along with all malice.

Eph 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to **anger**, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Col 3:8 But now, set them all aside—**anger**, rage, malice, slander, and foul language out of your mouth.

1Ti 2:8 So I desire all men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without **anger** and argument.

Jas 1:19 Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: let every person be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to **anger**—

Jas 1:20 for human **anger** doesn't produce the righteousness of God.

Death of Aaron – Priesthood passed on to his son Eleazar.

Num 20:23 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom,

Num 20:24 **"Let Aaron be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land that I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah.**

Num 20:25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor.

Num 20:26 And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. **And Aaron shall be gathered to his people and shall die there."**

Num 20:27 Moses did as the LORD commanded. And they went up Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

Num 20:28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

Num 20:29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron had perished, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

We see that not only would Moses not enter into the Promised Land, but Aaron and Miriam died before they were able to enter into the land.



Kvetching – No Bread, Nor Water, We hate this food!

Num 21:4 They travelled from Mount Hor along the route to the Sea of Reeds in order to go around the land of Edom. The spirit of the people became impatient along the way.

Num 21:5 The people spoke against God and Moses: **“Why have you brought us from Egypt to die in the wilderness, because there is no bread,**

no water, and our very spirits detest the despicable food?

Num 21:6 So Adonai sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people and many of the people of Israel died.

Num 21:7 The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against Adonai and you! Pray to Adonai for us, that He may take away the snakes!” **So Moses prayed for the people.**

“Hence we learn, says the Midrash, “that when a man is asked to forgive, he must not cruelly refuse to do so. The people had spoken against Moses, but yet in the hour of their extremity Moses readily forgave, and prayed for their deliverance. Dr. J.H. Hertz

This is a lesson to those who are leaders, because we have all experienced, on a much smaller scale what Moses had experienced in leading Gods people. We need to pray for those who come against us, which is not an easy task, but we have the example of Moses and our Messiah Yeshua. Yeshua taught this many times to us in his teachings.

Mat 6:12 And **forgive** us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Mat 6:14 “For if you **forgive** others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also **forgive** you.

Mat 6:15 But if you do not **forgive** others, neither will your Father **forgive** your transgressions.

Mat 18:21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Master, how often shall I **forgive** my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”

Mar 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive** him, so that your Father in heaven may also **forgive** you your transgressions.”

Luk 11:4 And **forgive** us our sins, for we also **forgive** everyone indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Luk 17:3 “Keep yourselves alert! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, **forgive** him.

Luk 17:4 Even if he sins against you seven times a day, and seven times returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall **forgive** him.”

Luk 23:34 But Yeshua was saying, “Father, **forgive** them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Then they cast lots, dividing up His clothing.

Joh 20:23 If you **forgive** anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; but if you hold back, they are held back.”

2Co 2:7 So instead you should **forgive** him and encourage him. Otherwise such a person might be swallowed up by excessive sorrow.

2Co 2:10 Now anyone you **forgive**, I also **forgive**. For indeed, what I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything), I did it for you in the presence of Messiah,

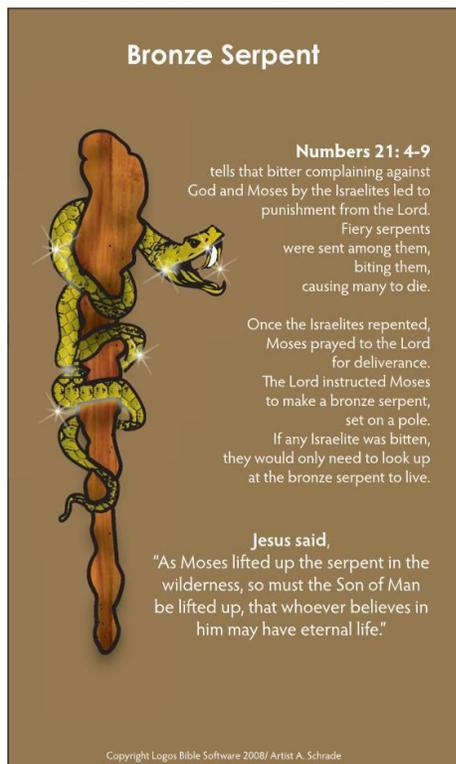
1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to **forgive** our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

God brings Healing and Deliverance because of Moses prayers;

Num 21:8 Adonai said to Moses, “Make yourself a fiery snake and put it on a pole. Whenever anyone who has been bitten will look at it, he will live.”

Num 21:9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole, and it happened that whenever a snake bit anyone and he looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

“When he looked “Did then the brazen serpent possess the power of slaying or of bringing to life? No, but as long as the Israelites looked upwards and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were healed. But when they refused, then they were destroyed” (Mishnah) The brazen serpent was a “token of salvation to put them in remembrance of the commandments of Thy Law, for he that turned toward it was not saved because of that which was beheld but because of Thee, the Savior of all: (Wisdom of Soloman).Dr. J. H. Hertz”



The brazen serpent here is clearly a type of Messiah bearing the sins and sicknesses of all men.

Mat 8:16 When evening came, the people brought to Him many who were afflicted by demons. He forced out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

Mat 8:17 So was fulfilled what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, “He Himself took our sicknesses and carried away our diseases.”

Joh 3:14 Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

Joh 3:15 so that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life!

Joh 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Joh 10:10 The thief comes only to steal, slaughter, and destroy. I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly!

Joh 10:11 I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

1Pe 2:24 He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, removed from sins, might live for righteousness. "By His wounds you were healed."

1Pe 2:25 For you like sheep were going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Isa 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our pains. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, struck by God, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

1. The serpent itself was a symbol of sin: Messiah was made sin for us that we may be made free from sin (2 or. 5:21)
2. The serpent was lifted up on a pole; Messiah was lifted up on an execution stake (John 3:14-15)
3. The sick of Israel received healing by looking on the brazen serpent; others have received healing by looking to Messiah (Mt. 8:17; Jn 3:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; Isa 53)
4. As the Israelites who looked on the servant continued to live, so those who truly look to Messiah will live eternally (Jn 3:14-15)
5. God provided no other remedy for the Israelites at this time; so Messiah is the only remedy for those who wish salvation (Jn. 3:14-16; Acts 3:16; 4:12; Rom 10:9-10)
6. As the Israelites had to have faith in the brazen serpent as the remedy for their sin and sickness, so men today must have faith in Messiah (Eph 2:8-9)
7. As God's power was the invisible force in the brazen serpent remedy, so it is with salvation through Messiah. (Mt. 1:21; Rom 1:16, Col 2:12-13)
8. As the serpent on the pole brought shalom and reconciliation with God, so Messiah on the cross brought shalom and reconciliation with Him (Col 1:20-21)
9. As confession of sin and prayer were necessary for Israel to receive the benefits of the brazen serpent remedy, so they are necessary to obtain the benefits of Messiah and His atonement for us (Jn 3:14-16; Rom 10:9-10, Jn 1:9)