

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation

(Under same management for over 5778 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

June 16th – 10:30 AM Lolo Community "Synagogue"
12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Study



"Blessed are those whose way of life is blameless; who live by the Torah of

Adonai

Blessed are those who observe His instruction; who seek Him with all their heart."

Ps 119

B'midbar (Numbers) 20:7- 8

וַיֹּדֶבֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:

וַיֹּדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר

Va-y'daber Adonai el-Moshe lemor.

And the Lord said to Moses,

קַח אֶת־הַמַּטֵּה וְהַקְהֵל אֶת־הָעֵדָה אֹתָהּ וְאַחֲרָיָהּ אַחִיךָ

קַח אֶת הַמַּטֵּה וְהַקְהֵל אֶת הָעֵדָה אֹתָהּ וְאַחֲרָיָהּ אַחִיךָ

Kach et-hamateh v'hakhel et-ha'edah atah v'Aharon achicha

Take the rod, and you and your brother, Aaron, gather the congregation

וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל־הַסֶּלֶעַ לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיַּמֵּי

וְדַבַּרְתֶּם אֶל הַסֶּלֶעַ לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיַּמֵּי

v'dibartem el-hasela l'eyn'yhem v'natan m'yamav

and speak to the cliff rock before their eyes that it will give its water.....

B'midbar (Numbers) 20:10 - 12

וַיִּקְהֲלוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַקָּהָל אֶל־פְּנֵי הַסֹּלֶעַ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם
וַיִּקְהֲלוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת הַקָּהָל אֶל פְּנֵי הַסֹּלֶעַ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם

Va-yakhilu Moshe v'Aharon et-hakahal el-p'ney hasela va-yomer lahem
And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock and said to them,

שְׂמַעוּ־נָא הַמֹּרִים הַמִּן־הַסֹּלֶעַ הַזֶּה נוֹצֵיא לָכֶם מַיִם:
שְׂמַעוּ נָא הַמֹּרִים הַמִּן הַסֹּלֶעַ הַזֶּה נוֹצֵיא לָכֶם מַיִם

shim'u-na hamorim hamin-hasela hazeh notsi lachem mayim.

"Listen now, you rebels! Shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?"

וַיָּרֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַסֹּלֶעַ בְּמַטְהוֹ
וַיָּרֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת הַסֹּלֶעַ בְּמַטְהוֹ

Va-yarem Moshe et-yado va-yach et-hasela b'matehu

And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the cliff rock twice with his rod;

פָּעַמִּים וַיֵּצְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים וַתִּשָּׂף הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם:
פָּעַמִּים וַיֵּצְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים וַתִּשָּׂף הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם

pa'amayim va-y'ts'u mayim rabim va-t'sht ha'edah uv'iram.

and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אַהֲרֹן יַעַן לֹא־הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינַי
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאַל אַהֲרֹן יַעַן לֹא הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינַי

Va-yomer Adonai el-Moshe v'el-Aharonya'an lo-
h'emantem bi l'hakdisheni l'eyney

And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron,

because you have not believed Me to treat Me as holy in the sight of

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם

b'ney Yisra'el lachen lo tavi'u et-hakahal hazeh el-ha'arets asher-
natati lahem.

the children of Israel,

therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land, which I have given them.

Numbers 19

The Red Heifer -- God Makes Provision for Man to Fellowship with Him



Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, "This is the statute of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed. And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence....."

The Torah portion for this week covers the last of several events that occur just before the end of the 40 years after God's people had left Egypt. During this time the first generation had failed to trust God and follow His leadership through Moses. Instead their focus was continually on themselves and "their predicament." Consequently, those in the first generation who were numbered from 20 years old and upward, who were able to go into battle, were condemned by God to wander in the desert for 38 more years, until that whole generation had died. Failing to keep their belief in God's continuing provision for them, the people would fail to achieve God's ultimate physical provision for them: God's rest in the land promised to them, a land of "milk and honey." Today, we should view this disaster of the first generation of those leaving Egypt as an example of what happens to those who do not fully trust in God's leadership and His provision for us. God cannot lead into His rest those who do not trust Him. Only those who accept the atonement through Messiah can enter into eternal life. Only those who fully trust God on a daily basis can achieve God's will for them each day. It is the contrite

heart that repents, confesses, and desires a renewed relationship with God. All of God's people are accountable to Him on a daily basis. No one is exempt...not even God's appointed leaders!

Red Heifer Ashes as Purification from the Defilement of Sin

In **Chapter 19**, God provided His people with a powerful cleansing agent for their purification from sin. They are told by God through Moses and Aaron to bring "...an unblemished red heifer in which is not defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed..." outside the camp to a place that was ritually clean. This heifer was slaughtered in the presence of Eleazar, the eldest living son of Aaron, by a ritually clean person, and some of its blood sprinkled toward the tabernacle. Then the rest of the heifer was totally burned, along with cedar, hyssop and scarlet material (other cleansing agents). The ashes from the fire would be kept in a ritually clean place outside the camp. When mixed with flowing (Heb. "living") water, they were able to cleanse a person from impurity, such as the impurity from touching or association in some way with the dead. Even the "clean" person, who collected the ashes from the dead heifer was contaminated by the process and had to utilize the ashes for his own purification. According to Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, "The fact that the ashes of the Heifer "purify the contaminated and contaminate the pure" carries an important lesson to us in our daily lives: If your fellow has been infected by impurity and corruption, do not hesitate to get involved and do everything within your power to rehabilitate him." I would add that all of us are daily infected by impurity and corruption, but the only rehabilitation possible is that available through Messiah...." **For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14)** Prior to God's people entering their land, where they would be encountering and fighting against various Canaanite tribes, there was the need for ritual purification before being allowed to again enter into normal congregational, tabernacle life. The contaminated person would ..."purify himself from uncleanness with the 'water' (mixture) on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he shall be clean." Any contaminated person failing to do so would defile the tabernacle and be executed. Again we see God's principle of limited access. God is holy and does not allow sin to exist in His presence! Since we today have available the most powerful cleansing agent for purification from sin, the atonement blood of Messiah, is the Biblical sacrifice of the red heifer important for us? Yes, for several reasons. First it underlines God's principle of limited access, which is still in effect. Even today, God does not allow those whose "sins are on their own heads" to come into His presence. Therefore everyone seeking God must avail themselves of His provision for their purification from sin through acceptance of the atonement of Messiah! Secondly, non-Messianic Rabbis believe that to build and to worship in the third Temple in Jerusalem, they must be ritually cleansed via the ashes of a red heifer. They believe that only nine red heifers were prepared from the time that the Jewish people were given this commandment until the Second Temple was destroyed. The first was prepared by Moses, the second by Ezra, and another seven were prepared from Ezra until the Temple's destruction. The tenth Heifer, they believe, will be prepared by Messiah (Mishneh Torah - a collection of Torah laws compiled by Maimonides). Since they now believe that such an animal exists, they are closer to being able to build the Temple and again initiate sacrifices. Religious Arabs believe that the construction of a Temple close to their Dome of the Rock is a threat to them; a threat for which they are willing to die to oppose. For Jewish and Gentile believers in Messiah, the building of the third Temple is a preview to anti-Christ's public arrival and his eventual defeat by Messiah. Therefore the search for a red heifer shows us how close we are to the building of the Third Temple and the second coming of Messiah.

Moses Strikes the Rock - Marc Chagall, 1957



God's Judgment on the Sin of Moses

Chapter 20 begins a very controversial subject; God's judgment on Moses. For if God truly did judge Moses, then Moses must have sinned and deserved judgment. Many orthodox Jews revere Moses, pointing out that not only was he God's appointed leader of the Jewish people, but also that ..."Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth (Num.12:3)....and"He is faithful in all My household (vs.7)"....and Moses was called God's servant (vs.8). They believe, contrary to the scriptural account in this parsha and most Rabbinic commentary, that Moses could not have sinned. They rationalize the reason that Moses was not allowed to enter the "promised land."

Thought Question: More importantly for us today is the question, Can we become such a righteous person that we are **always** faithful to God and **always** God's humble servant? Can we achieve such a spiritual state that our lives transcend the ability to sin? If you believe that Moses did not sin, then you might feel you can work your way towards complete righteousness too!

In the first month of the 40th year after leaving Egypt (we know it's the 40th year because in verses 27-28, Aaron died, and his death was in the 40th year [Num.33:38]), Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron died in Kadesh-Barnea. By now almost all of the first generation of those who left Egypt had died in the wilderness. So those who complained to Moses, using the same complaints as did their parents (no water; leaving a land of abundance [slavery in Egypt] to die in a wilderness) were from the 2nd generation, whom one might have thought would have learned from their parents' mistake and would have trusted God. But no...hearts are not so easily changed, unless they are supernaturally changed! God told Moses to assemble the people and take his rod (the same rod previously used to hit a rock and produce water [Ex.17:6]) and publicly speak to (Heb. "ha sela," "the cliff rock") to produce water for them. Taking his rod, Moses became angry with the people saying,

"Listen now, you rebels; **shall we** (He & Aaron) bring forth water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses struck the rock twice, and water came out for the people to drink.

God immediately rebuked Moses for 1) not believing Him and 2) not treating Him as holy in front of the people. And His judgment fell upon Moses: Moses would not be allowed to lead the people into the land but would, himself, die before entering the land. So begins the controversy: When in our parsha God tells Moses, "Take the staff ... and *speak* to the rock," it was surely a forgivable mistake to assume that God meant him also to hit it. That is what he had said last time. Moses was following precedent. And if God did not mean him to hit the rock, why did he command him to take his staff? Did Moses sin? Rabbinic commentator, Rashi, says that Moses sinned by disobedience to God, striking the rock, rather than speaking to it. Another Rabbinic commentator, Moses Maimonides, says that Moses sinned by becoming angry with the people. A third Rabbinic commentator, Nachmanides, claimed that the sin of Moses involved his lack of faith, rather than disobedience or becoming angry. Believers today must fully understand that the root of Moses' sin is the same for us today as it was for Moses: Lack of faith and lack of trust. Lack of faith and lack of trust in God produces in us disobedience, anger, complaining, arrogance, low self esteem, bitterness, and depression..... all the characteristics seen in the people of the first generation leaving Egypt and now in Moses. Perhaps the association of Moses with this unbelieving people over the last 40 years affected his relationship with God. Most assuredly, continued contact with lashon hara (evil speaking, murmuring and complaining) was contagious, even for Moses. Can wrong associations affect our relationship with God as well? I can still hear my father's voice responding to the annoyance of his sons saying (placing his hand parallel to the ground and just under his chin), "I've had it with you two....up to here!" Perhaps Moses felt he was "drowning" in the complaints and dissatisfaction of the people and responded with anger. Jewish law regulates outward conduct not inward feeling, but when it speaks of feelings, like the commands to love and not to hate, halakhah generally translates this into behavioural terms. For example, the Sefer ha-Hinnukh, says that "the heart follows the deed."

Certainly there are **lessons for us** to learn: **1a) Even the most faithful believer should not become over confident that he will not fail God, since everyone is subject to the temptations and failings of the flesh.**

1b) No one should ever allow their faith in God to be determined by their faith in the actions of men...even spiritual leaders. God will never fail them, but men always will! **2) Even if someone loses a blessing due to sin, they can still be used by God and still become a blessing to others.** **3) The privilege of spiritual leadership requires greater accountability...to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48).** **4) God expects unquestioned obedience to His commands. What He says, we must do!** **5) Spiritual leaders must be good examples at all times....both before God and before men.**

Moses sent messengers to ask the Edomites (and the Moabites, **Judges 11:17**) if he and God's people could pass through their land. When they were refused passage, Moses did not fight them because Edom was given his inheritance by Isaac. Instead Moses journeyed to Mt. Hor, where Aaron died. At 123 years old, Aaron was the first High Priest to die.

Chapter 21 details the defeat of Arad and Sihon and Og. As the sons and daughters of slaves for many generations, this 2nd generation of those leaving Egypt had no experience in war. In their first encounter, the king of Arad took some of God's people captive. The people knew they must trust God to fight for them. They vowed to utterly destroy the cities of Arad, if God delivered their enemies into their hands. The Hebrew word for "utterly destroy" means "totally devoted for destruction" or "taboo." In other words, everything and everyone was to be destroyed as an offering to God....nothing was spared or taken as spoils of war. God did deliver their enemies into their hands, and thus in Hormah (Heb. "destruction"), where Israel was defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites 39 years before (Num.14:45) at tell El-Mishash about 3.5 miles West of Arad, Israel was now victorious. Having been denied passage through Edom, they began a 200 mile detour around Edom towards the South and then East. Frustrated and impatient, the people began their usual complaints against God, even calling God's provision of manna (angel food) "insubstantial" or "vile." After 40 years of wandering in the desert, and after seeing God defeat their enemies, the people of the second

generation were frustrated about a 200 mile addition to their journey.....amazing! Again we see that the shallow belief of God's people caused them to be overcome by fleshly temptations, focusing on their "predicament," rather than on God's provision.



God judged their unbelief by sending fiery serpents to bite some of the people, causing many deaths. Fortunately, the people confessed their sin and took for themselves God's provision for their physical salvation. Moses made a fiery serpent out of bronze and put it on a pole above the people. His instructions for the people were to "look (at their salvation hung upon a pole) and live (physically)." How similar to the spiritual salvation offered by Messiah. After confession of our sins, our instructions are to look for our spiritual salvation to the atonement of Messiah hung on a pole and live eternally (John 3:14-15). One should note that not all of Israel was "saved" from physical death....only those who through faith looked to God's provision for their physical salvation. Similarly, not everyone will experience spiritual salvation....only those who through faith look to God's provision for their spiritual salvation.

The rest of Chapter 21 described the battles with Sihon, the king of the Amorites and Og, King of Bashan. Both kings made the mistake of coming out to battle with the God of Israel, who brought victory to His people. Israel drove out the inhabitants of the land of both kings and occupied it themselves; East of the Jordan River just across from Jericho.

SHABBAT SHALOM