

Parasha 39: Chukat (Ordinance/Decree)

Bamidbar/Numbers 19:1-22:1

*All Scripture References from The Orthodox Jewish Bible- Referred to as OJB- unless otherwise noted

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Our parasha for this week opens with a look at one of the *'most puzzling instructions'* that brother Yehudah/Judah considers to be in all of Torah. There is a reason why this is, and we'll touch on that as we go along. However, before we go into our parasha, it is needful to *'remind ourselves of a concept'* we have spoken of before.

*Ein Mukdam O Me-Uchar B'Torah...
There is no 'before' and 'after' in Torah*

Why must we return to this? Because in this Torah parasha, we have *'silently passed in time'* almost **THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS!** We are not with the *'same generation'* of Yisrael with whom we were just studying in our previous parasha, *'Korach'*. We are now with the *'Second Generation'*. Time has again become *relative* to the importance of *'moving in revelation'* of what YHWH *'desires us to grasp'* at this point in the Torah. We are very close to the time when Yisrael is about to *'cross over'* the Yarden/Jordan, and begin the *'conquest of The Land of their inheritance'*. It is necessary for us to *know this'*. Otherwise, we will *'misunderstand the thoughts that YHWH wants us to learn'*. Miryam/Miriam, Moshe's sister, dies in this parasha. Aharon also dies here too. Only Moshe is left from those of his immediate family. Realizing this, helps us *'understand all that has transpired and also sets the scene for another great failure'* in Yisrael's history. Only this time, the failure is **NOT** merely with Am Yisrael. It is with Moshe, and Aharon!

Beloved, none of us, no matter our history or previous successes are immune to failure. Nor are we exempt from the *'costliness those consequences'* will impose. This *'Second Generation'* of Am Yisrael will, unfortunately, *'continue to manifest the same spirit'* as their avot/fathers before them. The avot/fathers of the *'First Generation complained'* when they entered the *'Wilderness of Sin (Se-en)/Rephidim-'* just after their exodus from Mitzrayim/Egypt. They found things there were not quite what they hoped it would be. However, the *'motivation of the present generation'* here in our parasha and their *'reason for complaining'* was **NOT** the same as that of their forefathers. YHWH's *'response to this Second Generation's manifestation of a contentious and accusative spirit'* is therefore, based upon a *'different set of reasoning'*. Regardless, Moshe and Aharon's *'reaction'* was out of a *'mindset of preconception'*. They *'judged this present generation'* in accordance with the *'failures of their avot/fathers'*. This miscalculation, mixed with anger as we will see, *'provoked Moshe to disobey YHWH's instructions'*. In turn, YHWH's *'response'* to His leader's failure was *'quick and severe'*. Why? As we will see, there is a very *'crucial lesson that must be learned by all who bear the serious weightiness of the call to be leaders'* among YHWH's people.

The Instructions Concerning the Red Heifer/Parah Adumah

*"And Hashem [YHWH] spoke unto Moshe and unto Aharon, saying,
This is the chukkat hatorah [ordinance/decree/illogical in nature of the instruction] which Hashem [YHWH] hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the Bnei Yisroel [the Children of Yisrael], that they*

bring thee a completely red female cow *[that has not produced a calf]*, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came ol (yoke):
 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar HaKohen *[The Priest]*, that he may bring her forth outside the machaneh *[camp]*, and one shall slaughter (shachat) her before his face;
 And Eleazar HaKohen *[The Priest]* shall take of her dahm *[blood]* with his finger, and sprinkle of her dahm *[blood]* directly before the Ohel Mo'ed *[Tent of Meeting]* seven times;
 And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her hide, and her basar *[flesh]*, and her dahm *[blood]*, with her dung, shall he burn;
 And the kohen *[priest]* shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and crimson thread, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer.
 Then the kohen *[priest]* shall wash his clothes, and he shall immerse his basar *[flesh]* in mayim *[water]*, and afterward he shall come into the machaneh *[camp]*, and the kohen *[priest]* shall be tamei *[unclean]* until the erev *[evening]*.
 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in mayim *[water]*, and immerse his basar *[flesh]* in mayim *[water]*, and shall be tamei *[unclean]* until the erev *[evening]*.
 And a man that is tahor *[clean]* shall gather up the ashes of the cow, and lay them up outside the machaneh *[camp]* in a makom tahor *[clean place]*, and it shall be in safekeeping for HaEdah Bnei Yisroel *[The Assembly of the Children of Yisrael]* for water of sprinkling; it is for sin purification.
 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be tamei *[unclean]* until the erev *[evening]*; and it shall be unto the Bnei Yisroel *[Children of Yisrael]*, and unto the ger *[stranger]* that sojourneth among them, for a chukkat olam *[ordinance/decreed forever]*.”
 (Bamidbar/Numbers 19:1-10 OJB- definitions mine)

As we begin, let's take a moment to remind ourselves of a few points concerning the Torah and its instructions. There are basically 'three kinds of commands/instructions' used in Torah. They are: 'Eidut', 'Mishpatim and Chok/Chukat (sing.) or Chukkim/Chukkot' (plural).

- 1.) **Eidut**- are 'commands that are used to recall events that are past'. This would be like the 'Shabbat or the Mo'edim/Appointed Times'... etc.
- 2.) **Mishpatim**- are 'clear commands/instructions' that are both 'positive and negative'. These two are in most instances 'very logical and rational' in nature.
- 3.) **Chok/Chukat/Chukkim/Chukkot**- are 'different' in that they are 'seemingly illogical and irrational'. These 'commands/instructions', as the rabbis say, 'take more faith to keep', because they **DO NOT** 'appeal to the mental desire for clear comprehension'. To make it 'even more difficult', in most instances, YHWH usually 'doesn't give much explanation', if any, as to **WHY** He is giving such a 'command/instruction'. It has been said, it's almost like when parents tell their children: **JUST DO IT!** Explanation **NOT** included. The fact is, to quote a 'Hebrew idiom': **IN DOING YOU SHALL KNOW**. YHWH will **NEVER** ask us to do something that is bad for us. In that we may fully trust. So, even without **LOGICAL** and **RATIONAL** clarity, we simply **TRUST** in His goodness and **DO** what He has instructed. As we do, it 'maybe', that the 'understanding will become made clear'. If not, **IT DOESN'T MATTER**. YHWH is 'M'lekh HaOlam/King of the Universe'! He is **SOVEREIGN** and we 'lovingly surrender' to His will... **FOR HIS GLORY!**

Now, here are some things that make this particular korban/offering of the Red Heifer so very unique:

- 1.) It is the **ONLY KORBAN** required to be a 'specific color'... red
- 2.) It is the **ONLY KORBAN** when offered, was to take place 'outside the camp'
- 3.) It is the **ONLY KORBAN** that made the one preparing and administering it 'tamei/unclean'
- 4.) However, the **ONE TO WHOM IT WAS BEING ADMINISTERED** was made 'tahor/clean'

- 5.) It was the **ONLY KORBAN** in which the ashes were '*kept to be used later*'.
- 6.) The **ASHES OF THE OTHER KORBAN** were '*gathered and disposed of outside the camp*'

Insights Into The Red Heifer

Now, earlier, we alluded to the fact that to brother Yehudah/Judah this '*chok/decreed of the Red Heifer*' has been a '*source of great mystery*' throughout time. We'll begin to '*shed a little light*' on this now and continue as we go along.

The first thing to note is, the '*instructions concerning the offering of this korban of the Red Heifer*' is said to be a '*chukkat olam or everlasting (of indefinite time) decree*'. We learned in our Torah parasha '*Emor*', that the term '*olam is a Hebrew word*' that may have '*many different meanings*' depending on how it is used. On one hand, it can mean '*time out of mind, always, eternal, forever*'. At the same time, it may also mean '*time whose endurance maybe long or even indefinite*'. The '*latter definition*' we came to see is what YHWH meant '*regarding the existence of the Aharonic Priesthood*' being defined as '*olam*'. It is **NOT** an '*eternal priesthood*', defined as being '*forever... time out of mind*'. Whereas the '*Melkhi-Tzedek priesthood*' is. For this reason, it is '*also identified as being better than*' it's counterpart. (see **Ivrim/Hebrews 7**) The '*Aharonic Priesthood is tied intrinsically to the existence of the Mishkan/Tabernacle*' and later, the '*Heikhal/Temple*'. When the time comes that the '*Heikhal/Temple*' should ever '*cease to permanently exist*' (**Hitgalut/Revelation 21:3; 22**), then so will the '*Aharonic Priesthood*'. This is also the '*intended meaning*' of the command/instruction of the offering of the '*Red Heifer*'. (**Bamidbar/Numbers 19:10**) As we are about to see, the '*decree/statute of the Red Heifer*' is intrinsically related to the '*final coming of YHWH's Mashiach, as Mashiach Ben David*'. When that happens and the '*final red heifer*' appears, the '*chukkat olam*' concerning it will also '*no longer be needed*'. The inference of which is given credence by the statement below. One of the most recognized '*Jewish Torah Sages*', Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, known as the '*Rambam*', gives this assessment of the '*Red Heifer*'.

*'From the time of the giving of this decree to Moshe, to the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, there were **NINE** Red Heifers offered. The **TENTH** will be offered by M'lekh Mashiach/King Messiah when he comes!'*

Now, in the '*Jewish Traditional Writings*' (**Talmud/Mishnah**), they refer to the '*Red Heifer*' in Hebrew not as '*Parah Adamah, but as Parah Dumah*'. In Hebrew, the word '*parah means cow*'. '*Adamah means red*'. But the rabbis instead use the word '*dumah instead of adamah*'. The meaning of '*dumah is silent*'. Now, '*let's connect this*' to the instruction that this '*red cow was to be perfect*'. The word in Hebrew used here for '*perfect is, tamiym*'. It means '*whole, sound, healthful or unimpaired*'. In other words, there was to be **NO PHYSICAL BLEMISH**. This was to include the '*actual color of the hair*'. There were to be **NO BLACK OR WHITE HAIRS** over any of its coat.

Is any of this starting to ring a bell? It should because with '*only these few clues*', we should be starting to see our blessed Master, Adon/Lord Yeshua coming into view! As the '*korban for our sin*' **HE WAS PERFECT!** There was **NO SIN FOUND IN HIM**. (**Kefa Alef/1 Peter 2:22; Ivrim/Hebrews 4:14- NO YOKE OF BONDAGE WAS EVER UPON HIM**) In '*all His suffering*', though accused and railed upon He **DID NOT ANSWER** in His own defense. He **REMAINED SILENT** before His accusers! (**Kefa Alef/1 Peter 2:23**)

As we go on, it will become '*even clearer*' as to Whom this '*Red Heifer*' is speaking. Further, as we have said, the word for '*red in Hebrew is adamah*'. While it can mean '*red*', it can also mean '*man*'. The word for '*heifer*' in Hebrew is '*parah*' and is related to its '*root word*' when used as a verb '*parar*', meaning

'to break or shatter'. So, putting those definitions together the meaning becomes... *'a man who is broken'*. This *'certainly is a picture'* of our Master Yeshua's *'redemptive death on the physical execution stake'*! (**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 53:4-5**)

In the third verse in our passage, YHWH instructs that the *'kohen/priest'* is to take the *'Red Heifer to a place outside the camp'* of Am Yisrael. There, the korban is to be prepared. Again, this is the **ONLY KORBAN** offered that is done so **OUTSIDE THE CAMP**. In the book of Ivrim/Hebrews we read,

"For the zevakhim [offerings] whose dahm [blood] is brought into the Kodesh HaKodashim [Most Holy Place] by the Kohen Gadol [High Priest] as a Kapparat HaChet [Atonement for Sin] are burned outside the machaneh (camp).

Therefore, Yehoshua [Joshua; Yeshua- Aramaic shortened form] also, that he might make the Am Brit kadoshim [People of the Covenant holy] through his own dahm [blood], suffered outside the sha'ar [gate].

So then, let us go out to him outside the machaneh [camp], bearing the reproach of Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach [Teacher, King The Messiah]." (Ivrim/Hebrews 13:11-13 OJB- **definitions mine**)

Now, we are *'seeing the instructions'* concerning the *'Red Heifer have a clear connection'* with our Master Yeshua. Just as this korban was offered *'outside the camp'*, even so was our blessed Master *'offered outside the camp of the city of Yerushalayim/Jerusalem'*... on the Mount of Olives. In the same way, the Kohen HaGadol/High Priest, during the time when the Second Heikhal/Temple stood, would look upon it and the *'Most Holy Place as this heifer was being prepared to be offered'*.

"And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her hide, and her basar [flesh], and her dahm [blood], with her dung, shall he burn; And the kohen [priest] shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and crimson thread, and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer." (Bamidbar/Numbers 19:5-6 OJB- **definitions mine**)

The *'entire korban was to be consumed, burned in the fire'*. Notice also what else is to be put into the fire with the cow: *'cedar wood, hyssop and crimson thread'*. As you will remember from our Torah parasha in the sefer/book of Vayikra/Leviticus *'Metzora'*, these are the **SAME ARTICLES** that were used in the *'cleansing of a person who had begun to manifest the symptoms of tzara'at'*. Here, in the *'instructions on preparing the korban of the Red Heifer'*, these are actually *'incorporated into the offering with the blood'*. This is because, the *'ashes of the Red Heifer'* will be used to *'cleanse those who have been made tamei/unclean by the touching a dead body'*.

The Torah is what brings to us the *'discernment between the realms of life and death'*. When you *'touch the realm of death'*, then you experience a *'change in status'*. You become *'tamei/unclean'*. It does not mean that *'you have sinned'* necessarily. The sin comes *'if a person in that status was to try and approach the Mishkan/Tabernacle or later, the Heikhal/Temple'* where YHWH's *'Sh'khinyah/Manifest Presence'* was. **THEN IT WILL END IN DEATH**. However, the ashes of the *'Red Heifer'* are used to bring *'cleansing'*. ****[change in 'status from tamei/unclean to tahor/clean']** A *'transition'* from the *'realm of death'*, to be *'restored to the realm of life'*.

"But when Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach [Teacher, King The Messiah] came as the Kohen Gadol [High Priest] of the coming tovot (good things), he entered through the Mishkan Gadol, the greater and more perfect Mishkan, not made with hands, that is, not of this B'ri'ah (Creation); Not through the dahm [blood] of se'irim (goats) and of agalim (bulls) but through his own dahm [blood] [Isa 52:15] he entered the Kodesh HaKodashim [Most Holy Place] once and for all, having secured for us the Geulah Olamim [Eternal Redemption].

For if the dahm [blood] of se'irim (goats) and parim (young bulls) and THE ASHES OF AN HEIFER sprinkling those who have become tum'a (uncleanness), if this dahm [blood] sets apart for kedushah [holiness] for the tohorah (purification) of the basar [flesh], By how much more will the dahm [blood] of Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach [Teacher, King The Messiah] who through the eternal Ruach Hakodesh [Spirit of Holiness] offered himself without MUM/DEFECT) to G-d [Elohim/The Mighty One],

*By how much more will his DAHM [BLOOD] (Isa 52:15) purify our matzpun (conscience) from ma'asim metim (dead works) in order to serve the Elohim Chayyim [Mighty One of Life].”
(Ivrim/Hebrews 9:11-14 OJB- definitions/emphasis mine)*

Now, the connection is 'becoming much clearer'. Yeshua HaMashiach/The Messiah is indeed **WHO** the 'Red Heifer' is pointing toward. The writer of Ivrim/Hebrews makes this **ABUNDANTLY CLEAR**. The blood of our blessed Mashiach Yeshua, our 'Go'el/Kinsman Redeemer and Kohen HaGadol/High Priest' is able to **BLOT OUT** the 'power of death' brought on by sin. His blood was **PURE**, there was **NO CONNECTION** between it and the 'blood of human beings' contaminated with the 'fallen corruption' due to the 'First Adam's sinful disobedience'. It completely **WIPE AWAY** the record of **ALL** our 'chatta'im/sinful transgressions, peyashim/rebellions and avonim/torahless' (**iniquities**), of which the Torah compiles against us. ****[Colossians 2:14- Please Note- this does not mean that the Torah itself was nailed to the physical execution stake, ONLY the 'transgressions' which we were guilty of committing against YHWH. The revealing of sinfulness is only one aspect of the Torah's ability. The blood of our blessed Mashiach 'takes/wipes away' those transgressions and brings shalom/completeness/peace between our Creator and us. It cleanses the conscience and destroys the hold which death had upon us. (see also Colossians 1:20)]**

Let me also take just a moment and address a very important point. The 'theology of the church of Christendom' would have us believe that the 'animal korban' offered under the 'first renewal' (**Shemot/Exodus 32-34**) of YHWH's 'original giving of His Sinaitic Covenant' (**Shemot/Exodus 19-20**) did **NOTHING** in relation to the 'forgiveness of sins'. Well, **NOTHING** could be further from the truth! Go back and read over the above passage quoted from Ivrim/Hebrews. It **DOESN'T SAY** that those 'animal korbanot and their blood' did **NO GOOD**. It says that the **KORBANOT** and their **BLOOD**, including that of the **RED HEIFER**, did 'set apart' those who offered them, and in turn, 'purified them' (**the 'outward/physical-soul level'**), **THEN HOW MUCH MORE THE PERFECT KORBAN AND SINLESS BLOOD OF OUR BLESSED MASHIACH YESHUA!** The key is those 'former offerings' were **ONLY EFFECTIVE** on a 'particular level'... ****[that of the flesh- the outward physical/soul level]**. They could **ONLY CLEANSE** that realm. **NONETHELESS**, they did **CLEANSE** and **BRING FORGIVENESS!** It was only that the **FLESH LEVEL** was as **FAR** as it could go. It couldn't reach into the **INNER DEPTHS** of the sanctum of 'man's heart'. **THIS IS WHERE HIS SPIRIT, THE CONSCIENCE, DWELLS.** This is the place where **CONDEMNATION** lies. The 'blood of all the korban' offered under the 'first renewal' (**Shemot/Exodus 32-34**) of YHWH's original 'Sinaitic Covenant' (**Shemot/Exodus 19-20**), **COULD ONLY PROVIDE ATONEMENT/COVERING** for 'unintentional sins'. Then, on every 'Yom HaKipurrim/Day of Atonements' celebration, **ALL** the 'sins of Yisrael' (**unintentional and intentional**) could be dealt with. However, it was still **ONLY** on the 'flesh- the outward physical-soul level'. All those korbanot/offerings **WERE POINTING TO THE FINAL KORBAN/OFFERING** of YHWH's blessed **SEH ELOHIM/LAMB OF THE MIGHTY ONE... HIS SON, YESHUA HAMASHIACH/THE MESSIAH!** Only He could completely **TAKE AWAY** 'all our sins' at one time when we 'believed upon' Him! His **PURE AND HOLY BLOOD** could reach into the **INNER MOST SANCTUM** of our heart... **THE CONSCIENCE.** There to **CLEANSE OUR CONSCIENCE FROM ALL CONDEMNATION OUR SINS HAD BROUGHT TO US!** This is the **PROMISE** and **FULFILLMENT** of the **FINAL RENEWED COVENANT** given through the navi/prophet

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah. (**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 31:31-33**) A ONCE AND FOR ALL REDEMPTION that is **FINISHED** 'in *Mashiach*'. This is the significance of His **SITTING DOWN ON THE THRONE** in the heavens. Amein!

*“And it is by the ratzon Hashem [will of YHWH] that we will have been set apart for kedushah [holiness] through the korban NEFESH [OFFERING OF THE SOUL-LIFE MANIFEST IN THE PHYSICAL BODY] (YESHAYAH 53:10 cf. ASHAM [A GUILT] KORBAN) of Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach Yehoshua [Teacher, King The Messiah Yeshua- shortened Aramaic form], **ONCE AND FOR ALL.***

*And every kohen [priest] stands **DAILY** at his avodas kodesh sherut [service of holy ministry] ministering and offering **AGAIN AND AGAIN THE SAME KORBANOT** that can **NEVER TAKE AWAY CHATTA'IM [SINS] [THEY COULD ONLY ATONE/COVER];** But Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach [Teacher, King, The Messiah], having offered up **ONE KORBAN** for chatta'im [offering for sins] **FOR ALL TIME, YASHAV LIMIN HASHEM** (“**SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF G-D [ELOHIM/MIGHTY ONE] Ps 110:1,**” (Ivrim/Hebrews 10:10-12 **OJB- emphasis/definitions mine**))*

Now, let us look back on the reason why brother Yehudah/Judah finds this instruction in Torah 'so mystifying'. It has to do with the 'veil that shrouds his spiritual perception' of our blessed Mashiach Yeshua. Just as we, who are of the 'returning House of Yosef-Ephraim were partially blinded' because YHWH had 'veiled our heart, we could not see' the Torah. So, our brother Yehudah/Judah, except for those within the 'Messianic portion of the Jewish House', are themselves 'partially blinded' to their Mashiach. They, like us, will 'receive mercies from YHWH in time', and their eyes 'will be opened' too. Until then, this 'chok/illogical command/instruction' will continue to be a 'mystery of great proportion for our elder brother'. May we, the returning house of Yosef-Ephraim, be ready to 'return the favor of faithfulness in keeping Mashiach Yeshua vital and available', for the Jewish house, when their 'eyes are opened'. Brother Yehudah/Judah has 'prayed faithfully' for thousands of years for the 'restoration of the Whole House of Yisrael'. Granted, it's not happening just the way he has imagined, but **IT IS HAPPENING!** They have **PRAYED** and **KEPT TORAH ALIVE** for our return. **WE OWE THEM THAT SAME LABOR OF LOVE.** To **PRAY** for them and **KEEP** our blessed Mashiach Yeshua **VITAL** and **RELEVANT** within **HIS TRUE HEBRAIC SETTING AS THE TORAH PURSUANT MESSIAH HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN!** May that day come quickly and in our time!

The People Complain

“And there was no mayim [water] for the Edah [Congregation]; and they gathered themselves together against Moshe and against Aharon.

And the people contended with Moshe, and spoke, saying, if only we had died when our brethren died before Hashem [YHWH]!

And why have ye brought up the Kahal Hashem [Congregation of YHWH] into this midbar [wilderness], that we and our livestock should die here?

And why have ye made us to come up out of Mitzrayim [Egypt], to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of zera (grain), or of te'edah (fig), or of gefen (grapevine), or of pomegranates; neither is there any mayim [water] to drink.” (Bamidbar/Numbers 20:2-5 OJB- definitions mine)

The situation now shifts to find Yisrael having moved into the 'Wilderness of Tzin' [**Ze-en**], which is 'Kadesh'. Let us for clarity sake note again, this is **NOT** the same 'generation' of Am Yisrael that had 'initially come out' of Mitzrayim/Egypt. **CHRONOLOGICALLY, AS WE STATED EARLIER, WE ARE SOME THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS LATER AT THIS POINT IN OUR PARASHA.** Those who

are complaining here, are Am Yisrael from the 'Second Generation'. This is an 'important point' to have in mind as we will see.

It is here that Miryam/Miriam passes away. Suddenly, there is a lack of water. This has not happened, since Yisrael had come to 'Rephidim' shortly after they had been delivered from Mitzrayim/Egypt. This is where YHWH provided 'water from the rock' the first time. It is where Moshe was 'instructed to smite the rock and water flowed' by YHWH's mercies to satisfy the peoples need. Now, the 'Second Generation' have reached a 'similar place in their day'. They too are also facing a 'crisis of faith'.

What was the cause of the 'sudden stoppage of the waters from the rock'? Miryam/Miriam was a very renowned woman and recognized neviah/prophetess among the B'nei/Children of Yisrael. The 'Jewish Traditional Writings' say that it was a blessing to Yisrael on behalf of Miryam/Miriam that YHWH 'allowed this rock to actually follow them in the midbar/wilderness'. **(1 Corinthians 10:4- Rav Sha'ul references this)** This 'rock' was known as 'The Well of Miryam/Miriam'. Only 'after her death' did Yisrael again experience a 'lack of water'. Thus, Miryam's/Miriam's death would have been 'difficult to accept'. Am Yisrael, 'both generations', had always had 'deep struggles with the issues of trusting faithfulness'. The loss of Miryam/Miriam may have been enough to cause them to 'lose sight' of YHWH's faithfulness. Anyway, for whatever reason, the water stopped flowing.

At this point, the frustration opened the 'flood gates of strife'. The people rose up against Moshe and Aharon. They 'resumed the familiar habit of complaining' to Moshe for their troubles, just as their avot/fathers did. They 'complained' about their life and how hard it was. Moshe and Aharon, in turn, 'left the presence of the people' and went to the entrance of the 'Ohel Moed/Tent of Meeting' to call out to YHWH. He appears in answer to their prayer and 'begins to give them instructions' about what to do. We read,

"And Moshe and Aharon went from the presence of the Kahal [Congregation] unto the entrance of the Ohel Mo'ed [Tent of Meeting], and they fell upon their faces; and the kavod Hashem [glory of YHWH] appeared unto them.

And Hashem [YHWH] spoke unto Moshe, saying,

Take the rod and gather thou the Edah [Assembly] together, thou and Aharon thy brother, and SPEAK YE unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth its mayim [water], and thou shalt bring forth to them mayim [water] out of the rock; so thou shalt give the Edah [Assembly] and their beasts drink." (Bamidbar/Numbers 20:6-8 OJB- emphasis/definitions mine)

The 'instructions' were clear. Moshe was to 'take the rod of Aharon' from within the Mishkan/Tabernacle, 'gather the assembly together' and go, **SPEAK TO THE ROCK**. Like before, when Moshe 'had been obedient and had smitten the rock', this time, 'mayim/water would also flow'. Only this time, he was **SIMPLY TO SPEAK** to the rock... **NOT STRIKE IT!**

YHWH's Response To The Second Generation's Complaining

There is a 'distinct difference' between what happened when the 'First Generation complained' and what we have here in our parasha with the 'Second Generation'. The 'immediate reaction of the First Generation at Rephidim', was over the 'lack of water'. The 'next issue' came as they 'threatened to blame' Moshe and Aharon, 'murder them and return back to Mitzrayim/Egypt'.

Here, the 'Second Generation' is also faced with the 'lack of water' as they are entering the 'Wilderness of Tzin (pronounced... Seen)/Kadesh'. **HOWEVER, THAT WAS NOT THE FOCUS OF THEIR FIRST COMPLAINT.** They did not 'threaten to kill Moshe and Aharon or return to Mitzrayim/Egypt'.

Instead, this *'Second Generation complained'* that Moshe and Aharon had *'only brought them into the Wilderness of Tzin'* and **NOT INTO THE LAND**. Their *'fear'* was that *'they would die where they were'* **WITHOUT MAKING IT INTO THE LAND LIKE THEIR FATHERS!** The *'lack of water'* was secondary.

While the *'complaints of both generations were similar'*, they didn't have *'the same emphasis'*. The *'Second Generation'* **DID NOT** want *'to go back to Mitzrayim/Egypt'*. **NOR** did they *'want to murder Moshe and Aharon'*. They **WERE UPSET** that they *'weren't making the forward progress'* they thought they should. Their **DISAPPOINTMENT** was, they *'had not gotten into The Land YET'*. So, YHWH's *'response to them was one in His mercies'*. He *'instructed Moshe'* **NOT TO REACT HARSHLY**. He was to take **AHARON'S ROD BEFORE THE CONGREGATION**, in an effort to **REMIND THEM** that Moshe and Aharon were *'His choice to lead them'*. As such, the **SPEAKING** as **OPPOSED** to the **STRIKING Of The ROCK** was YHWH's attempt to *'remove their fear of dying in the wilderness and to comfort them by the manifestation of water flowing'* to satisfy their thirst. There was **NO JUDGMENT** in view here. There was **NO THREAT** against Moshe and Aharon's life, as happened before at Rephidim. So, YHWH's response is *'not in anger'*. He truly desired to *'encourage their trusting faithfulness'* in Him. This is further supported when you realize *'what the meaning behind YHWH's instruction for Moshe to bring forth water'* was really about. The *'Hebrew word'* used here is, *'hishikita (heshe-keetah)'*. It means *'to water'*, with the connotation *'as a shepherd does his flock'*. This *'watering'* is a **RESPONSE** of care and mercy. The actions of the *'First Generation'* was a result of **UNBELIEF!** **THEY WERE CALLING YHWH A LIAR!** We spoke of the danger of this *'type of spirit'* in our earlier parasha, *'Sh'lach L'kha'*. YHWH meets each generation's situation *'according to the condition of their heart'*.

Moshe's Failure

"And Moshe took the rod from before Hashem [YHWH], just as He commanded him.

*And Moshe and Aharon gathered the Kahal [Congregation] together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye morim (rebels, contentious ones); **MUST WE** fetch you mayim [water] out of this rock?*

And Moshe lifted up his hand, and with his rod he struck the rock twice; and the mayim [water] came out abundantly, and the Edah [Assembly] drank, and their beasts also." (Bamidbar/Numbers 20:9-11 OJB- emphasis/definitions mine)

Now, all seemed well. Moshe took the rod and called the assembly together before the rock, just as he had been instructed, but then something happened. Certainly, you couldn't blame Moshe for having his own patience taxed by the situation. How many times had he and Aharon been here throughout these many years of wandering? How many times had they *'endured the complaining and railing of the people'*? Each time they fell upon their faces in intercession. Each time remaining faithful to YHWH and responding in trusting faithfulness. But this time was different. Maybe, it was the *'cumulative effect'* of all the stressful years of *'bearing the weight of leadership'* that finally found its weakest link in Moshe's humanity. Maybe it was that, coupled with the loss of Moshe and Aharon's sister at this time. Whatever the reason, Moshe *'allowed the people's reaction'* to provoke his flesh. He opened his mouth and gave them their due. He told them exactly what he thought of them... **YOU REBELS!** Then came the words, that once said could not be taken back. **DO YOU WANT US TO GIVE YOU WATER OUT OF THE ROCK?** The rod was raised. Moshe did the unthinkable. **HE DISOBEYED THE ALMIGHTY.** He swung! The clap of the wood striking the rock sounded... not **ONCE...** but **TWICE!** The result? The waters flowed, **BUT** all was not well.

“And Hashem [YHWH] spoke unto Moshe and Aharon, Because ye BELIEVED ME NOT, to honor Me as kadosh [holy] in the eyes of the Bnei Yisroel [Children of Yisrael], therefore YE SHALL NOT bring this Kahal [Congregation] into HaAretz [The Land] which I have given them. These were the Waters of Merivah (Quarreling); because the Bnei Yisroel [Children of Yisrael] quarreled with Hashem [YHWH], and He showed Himself kadosh [holy] among them.”
(Bamidbar/Numbers 20:12-13 OJB- *emphasis/definitions mine*)

YHWH immediately responds to Moshe and Aharon! Their failure was not just a ‘simple misstep’. **IT WAS AN ACT BASED IN UNBELIEF!** Why unbelief? Because with all the dealings, especially on Moshe’s and Aharon’s behalf, they **KNEW** the ‘glory and holiness’ of YHWH. They **KNEW** how to ‘walk before Him’. On top of this, **THEY WERE LEADERS!** The way was made even ‘narrower’ for them as a result. This fall was not done in a corner. **IT WAS DONE PUBLICLY.** Therefore, it was ‘compounded’ because it is the ‘leader’s responsibility to shomer/guard themselves and guard YHWH’s holiness’. What those in ‘lesser degrees of responsibility’ may do and not suffer judgment, ‘those in leadership responsibility’ don’t have the same luxury. Ya’akob/James in his letter puts it like this,

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.” (Ya’akob/James 3:1 NASB- *New American Standard Bible*)

That ‘one moment of frustration’ brought a ‘discipline from YHWH’ to Moshe and his brother Aharon that is still hard to fathom for me. Yet, it is through Torah that I have come to understand the ‘reverential awe’ with which we must ‘learn to approach’ YHWH. We need to take something away from this and let it ‘sink down deep into our hearts’. Moshe and Aharon ‘failed to present YHWH as holy’ before Am Yisrael. They ‘openly disobeyed His clear instructions’ and Moshe did something ‘even more reprehensible’. It wasn’t just that he ‘spoke in anger’. There is a place where anger is acceptable, as long as it is a ‘response of love, **NOT** a ‘reaction’ out of sinful, selfish emotion. (**Ephesians 4:26**) Moshe’s great failure went much deeper. **HE TOUCHED THE GLORY!** As a result, ‘the rod of YHWH’s correction’ came with authority. **MOSHE AND AHARON HAD FAILED TO HONOR YHWH IN HIS HOLINESS BEFORE THE PEOPLE. THE COST? THEY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE AM YISRAEL INTO THE LAND!** I can’t tell you how profoundly that impacts my heart. You know YHWH loved Moshe. Yet, this ‘one act of short-sighted anger’ caused such great loss! It would be one that could not and would not be rectified.

The words Moshe spoke just prior to his ‘striking the rock’ not **ONCE**, but **TWICE**, ‘reveal the spirit’ he had taken on. While it was true that YHWH ‘manifested Himself’ many times through Moshe and Aharon, it was still YHWH that was **DOING THE WORK... NOT THEM!** Here, in this instance, Moshe ‘steps forward and in his anger’, takes center stage. **DO YOU WANT US TO FETCH THE WATER FOR YOU?** In other words, Moshe ‘touched the glory’. Beloved, that never ends well. **YOU WANT US TO GET THE WATER?** YHWH gives us **THE PRIVILEGE** of being a ‘part of the outworking of His power’ at times. As a result, ‘how deeply the principle of the execution stake’ needs to be ‘driven through our heart’. How ‘dead we need to be’ to our own sense of importance. **IT’S YHWH! IT’S ALWAYS ABOUT HIM! IT’S ALWAYS ABOUT HIS GLORY!** YHWH forbid that **WE SHOULD EVER TOUCH IT!** It has been said that there are ‘three G’s to success in ministry’. Stay away from the **GOLD**. Stay away from the **GIRLS**. Stay away from the **GLORY**. The latter being of paramount importance. So many times, it’s our words that are a ‘preview of our actions to follow’. Moshe, ‘emboldened by his anger’, ill-advisedly stepped into the forefront. He **TOOK THE CREDIT** to put those who had attacked him and Aharon in their place. It may have ‘felt good’. It may have given a ‘momentary sense of justification’. But, trust me, that nano second was **NOT WORTH THE PRICE** it was about to cost.

Beloved, let me just say a word here. The one thing I learned early on in my walk was *'the call to intercession'*. To *'pray for those'* who bear responsibility as leaders. I loved the men and women who served the congregations I attended. It was such an honor to hold them up before the Father, to carry that burden in prayer. If I could say anything to all who are in the Body of Mashiach **IT IS PRAY! PRAY FOR YOUR LEADERS**. They are not supermen. Cut them and they will bleed like all of us. They have their weaknesses. They live under a *'kind of pressure'* that very few ever get to experience. Where are the Aharons' and the Hurs' who will *'get up under the arms'* of their leaders and *'hold them up'* until the battle is done? I've often thought in my heart, every time I read this portion of Scripture about how many times Moshe and Aharon *'fell on their faces'* in intercession for Am Yisrael. How many times judgment that was well deserved was averted by the hearts of these men who bore the burden of Am Yisrael before YHWH? Yet not once, in this whole episode, is it recorded that *'anyone rushed forward and fell on their face'* for them in their *'moment of failure'*. I'm not saying that maybe it didn't happen, but there is **NO RECORD** of it being done. Would it have made a difference? It's hard to say. Sometimes the *'discipline of YHWH'* cannot be avoided. **BUT WHAT IF?** My heart cry is for all the Body of Mashiach to **PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER. PRAY FOR YOUR LEADERS**. Anyone can gripe and complain. **LOVE DESIRES THE BEST**. If you *'honor one another'* and those YHWH has *'placed in responsibility'* in the congregation, **WE WILL ALL BE ABLE TO RISE TOGETHER TO VICTORY!** May that be our cry.

There's much that goes into the fact that YHWH *'chose to act so swiftly and exacting'* with His judgment of Moshe and Aharon. We know from our earlier consideration of the *'water from the rock'*, when the First Generation was encamped at Rephidim. Beloved, this was **NO ORDINARY ROCK**. In fact, we know that Rav Sha'ul *'identifies that rock'* for us in his letter to the Corinthian assembly. The **ROCK** was none other than **OUR BLESSED MASHIACH YESHUA! (1 Corinthians 10:4)** So, for Moshe to *'strike'* that Rock a **SECOND TIME** was as if **IT WAS CAUSING MASHIACH TO SUFFER ALL OVER AGAIN**. It was a *'gross misjudgment'* on Moshe's part. With this in mind, then we see the *'severity of his actions'*. We are *'all warned'* by the writer of Ivrim/Hebrews to *'guard against our own unbelief in departing from the faith having once tasted of the good Word of our Mighty One and the powers of the age to come'*. If we do this, then we *'stand in danger'* of **NEVER** being able to be *'renewed to teshuvah/repentance again'*. Why? Because it would be as if we were *'hanging our Mashiach'* **BACK ON THAT EXECUTION STAKE AFRESH! YHWH FORBID! (Ivrim/Hebrews 6:4-6)** Oh beloved, this is indeed *'dangerous ground'* for anyone to find themselves on.

Take a *'long look'* at what happened to Moshe. As dear as he certainly was to the *'heart of YHWH'*, it did not make him *'immune from being put under the rod of correction'*. What a *'terrible price'* to be paid for a moment of *'seemingly justifiable anger'*! Yet, if he could suffer such a terrible sentence, then what of us? Remember, these things are here for our example. **(1 Corinthians 10:6)**

I especially plead with those in leadership to consider this. It is so easy to become frustrated with those whom YHWH has placed for us to watch over. There are times when the ungratefulness and criticism that comes weighs so heavily on a leader's heart. This is why *'one-man forms of leadership'* in congregational settings are so dangerous. We need others to help *'spread out the emotional and spiritual weight'* to form a base that can *'support the work of the ministry'* properly. We are blessed here at GTZ to have this. **NONE OF US STAND ALONE**. But, even in this, the *'danger is always present'* to give in to the pressure. **PLEASE HEAR MY CRY**. Consider the example set before us here. May we remain *'humble and needy'* of those around us in leadership for love, support and correction when needed.

Another Important Consideration

There is another important consideration that needs to be brought out here. Please note, that though Moshe was guilty of a *'severe level of sin'*... **THE WATER STILL FLOWED!** This speaks volumes.

We are living in especially dangerous days. These are the 'latter portion of the Achareit HaYamim/Latter Days'. Rav Sha'ul warns us of in his letter to the Thessalonians. (**11 Thessalonians 2 & 11 Timothy 3:1**) There would be all sorts of 'false manifestations' provided by none other than Hasatan himself! ****[May his memory be blotted out forever]** Our Master taught us **NOT TO FOLLOW MIRACLES!** Many will come in His Name, claiming His authority. The confusing part is, that the miracles 'actually' come! What is the 'measuring rod' then? How can we escape the danger? First and foremost, let us bring the words of our Rebbe Yeshua before us. He tells us clearly what to look for.

“Enter through the derech (way) of the shaar hatzarut (gate of narrowness), for wide is the delet [door] and broad is the rekhov (street) leading to Avaddon (destruction, hell, Abaddon), and rabbim (many) are they who enter through it.

But tzar (narrow) is the delet [door] and constricted is the Derech (Way) that leads to Chayyim (life) and few are the ones finding it.

Beware of the neviei hasheker (false prophets), who come to you in the malbush (clothing) of kevasim (sheep), but within are ravenous ze'evim (wolves).

By their perot (fruits) you will have da'as of them. Surely grapes are not gathered from thorns nor figs from thistles, are they?

So, every etz tov (good tree) produces pri tov (good fruit), but the etz nishchat (corrupt tree) produces pri rah. [evil fruit]

An etz tov [good tree] is not able to produce pri rah [evil fruit] nor is an etz nishchat [corrupt tree] able to produce pri tov [good fruit].

Kol etz (every tree) not producing pri tov [good fruit] is cut off and is thrown into HaEish (the Fire).

Therefore, by their perot (fruits) you shall have da'as [intimate revelation knowledge] of them.

Not all the ones saying to me, Adoneinu, Adonei, [Our Lord, My Lord] will enter the Malchut HaShomayim, [Kingdom of the Heavens] but the one DOING THE RATZON AVI SHBA-

SHOMAYIM (THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN [Mt 26:39]).

Many [messianic darshanim/preachers] will say to me [Moshiach/Messiah] on that Day [the Yom HaDin, the Day of Judgment], Adoneinu, Adonei [Our Lord, My Lord], did we not speak as neviim [prophets] in your Name? Did we not cast out shedim (evil spirits, demons) in your Name? Did we not accomplish many niflaot (miracles) in your Name?

And then I will tell them to their face, I NEVER HAD DA'AS [INTIMATE REVELATION KNOWLEDGE] OF YOU. DEPART FROM ME, YOU WORKERS OF MUFKARUT (LAWLESSNESS).” (Mattityahu/Matthew 7:13-23 OJB- emphasis/definitions mine)

Master Yeshua tells us plainly. It is the 'narrow way that leads to life'. The 'wide way' is the one 'leading to destruction'. What is this 'narrow way'? This is of utmost importance. There may be some who read this and will 'immediately reject' what is said. However, at the very end, our Rebbe makes it abundantly clear. The 'narrow way' is **THE DERECH/PATH OF THE TORAH!** Those who 'reject that fact' will be candidates for the 'deception' that will blanket the **LATTER PORTION** of those **LATTER DAYS**. We don't have time here to do an in-depth study of the 'validity and necessity of the Torah'. Just listen to the 'Words of our Master' as we go along. The Torah is **THE DOOR** to the 'narrow path that leads to life'. To the uninitiated, the 'commandments/instructions of Torah all seem too heavy... unnecessary'. It's 'all about grace' comes the cry. 'Jesus kept all the commandments, so we don't have to' is the rallying cry of those on the 'wide, easy path'. Beloved, I used to make those same statements. I rejected Torah in my 'partially blinded' ignorance. But, by YHWH's grace my eyes were opened. Now, I see how 'imperative the Torah' is to all who say they are followers of Mashiach.

Rebbe Yeshua goes on to tell us 'what we are to look for'. It's not 'anointings and miracles'. **IT IS FRUIT!** Only **GOOD TREES** produce **GOOD FRUIT**. **CORRUPT TREES CANNOT!** Remember, M'lekh/King David's words in the first Tehillah/Psalm. The man 'who meditates in YHWH's Torah' is

like a *'tree planted by the rivers of water'*. It brings forth its fruit in its season and its leaves **NEVER WHITHER**. Again... **IT'S THE TORAH!**

Then, Master Yeshua gets down to the crux of the issue. Many who preach in the Master's Name will come to Him *'in that day'*. What day? **THE DAY OF JUDGMENT!** The day when *'all men's works will pass under the rod'*. They will say, *'Our Lord, my Lord, did we not do many works in Your Name? Did we not prophesy in Your Name? Did we not cast out devils in Your Name?'* **THEN...** O how that tiny word rings so loud. **THEN...** our Adon/Master will look at them and say... **DEPART FROM ME YOU WORKERS OF INIQUITY (some translations say) ...**But, what is iniquity? **IT IS LAWLESSNESS** or more precisely... **TORAHLESSNESS! I NEVER KNEW YOU!** You see, it's the **TORAH** that *'prepares the bride to be cleansed and ready to meet her Bridegroom'* when He returns! Our blessed Adon/Lord Yeshua will **ONLY** take a *'pure, clean'* bride that has been *'prepared by obedience to YHWH's Torah'*. **ONLY A TORAH PURSUANT BRIDE KNOWS WHAT YHWH REQUIRES IN ORDER TO BE READY TO BE TAKEN INTO THE BRIDAL CHAMBER WITH HIS SON!**

Master Yeshua sends these away. He **REJECTS** them, even though they had *'signs'* that supposedly *'validated their work'*! Yet... **THEY HAD NO TORAH!** Torah is the **INSTRUCTION** of YHWH's Kingdom. **IT GOVERNS ALL HE DOES!** There are **NO** exceptions! **NO TORAH... NO VALIDATION BY THE KING!** These *'lawless workers'* **NEVER** heard the Lover of their soul *'whisper deep in their heart His most intimate words'*. They **NEVER** felt His *'passionate touch'* that speaks *'volumes to their heart'* even without words. No, these workers were *'ingenious'*. They were *'ambitious'*. For some, they may not have been *'evil in their intent'*. But, beloved, the old adage, *'Well, He/YHWH knows my heart'* is **NOT ENOUGH** here!

You see, sometimes in YHWH's mercies, He may *'allow miracles to happen'*. Sometimes, it's *'because of His love'* for the people, as in our parasha. **MOSHE SINNED**. He *'smote the rock'* in anger. **HE TOUCHED THE GLORY, BUT YHWH STILL GAVE THE WATER!** He knew **THE PEOPLE NEEDED IT!** Other times the miracles were **A TEST**. A test to see if we will *'abide in faithfulness'* to the *'Word of His Torah'*. To *'remain faithful'* to Him in the *'face of seeming contradiction'* or go after strange/false mighty ones. (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 13**)

In these **LATTER HOURS** of these **LATTER DAYS**, Hasatan (**may his memory be blotted out forever**) will come with all manner of *'lying wonders'* in order to *'deceive the whole world'*. Even the *'Elect of YHWH'* will be tried. (**Mattityahu/Matthew 24:24**) But the **ONE SIGN** that *'remains inescapable'* is the **SIGN OF HIS TORAH** which **NEVER** changes! Only those who *'pursue and keep'* His Torah will have the *'true validation'* of their ministry. All those who are sincere, but **VOID OF TORAH, WILL NEVER** be able *'to produce the good works'*. They are **NOT** *'planted by the rivers of water'* where the *'true power'* of YHWH, by His HaRuach HaKodesh/The Spirit of His Holiness, flows. Beloved, I don't want to be in that crowd who will *'hear those final shocking words'* from our Master's lips: *'Depart from Me you workers of torahlessness... I NEVER KNEW YOU INTIMATELY!*

The Death Of Aharon

There are a number of important things that are occurring in our Torah parasha/portion. There are conflicts with other nations. Yisrael is faced with three kings who resist their efforts to move on toward the Land of Promise. Each encounter is important. However, for the sake of time and space we won't consider these situations at present. We will focus on Am Yisrael's *'last encounter'* in our parasha. Here, they test YHWH again. There are some very important points that need to be brought out.

Of course, in this parasha, we have already had the death of Miryam/Miriam. Now, we will also have the next passing of one of the major characters in the Torah up to this point... the *'death of Aharon'*. YHWH instructs Moshe to go with him up to Mount Hor along with Eleazar, Aharon's son. There, Moshe *'takes the High Priestly garments'* from off Aharon and *'places them on Eleazar'*. He will now *'assume the role of Kohen HaGadol/High Priest'* to Yisrael. Aharon dies. When Moshe and Eleazar come back down from the Mount, the people see that Aharon is not with them. The *'reality of his passing'* begins to set in. They mourned greatly. All Yisrael mourned for thirty days showing how much they did indeed love this servant of YHWH.

The Encounter with the Fiery Serpents

“And they journeyed from Mt Hor by the way of the Yam Suf [Sea of Reeds], to go around Eretz [Land of] Edom; and the nefesh haAm [soul of the People] was much impatient because of the way. And the people spoke against Elohim [The Mighty One], and against Moshe, Why have ye brought us up out of Mitzrayim [Egypt] to die in the midbar [wilderness]? For there is no lechem [bread], neither is there any mayim [water]; and our nefesh [soul] loatheth this wretched lechem [bread]. And Hashem [YHWH] sent fiery nechashim [serpents] among the people, and they bit the people; and Am rav miYisroel [many People who were of Yisrael] died.” (Bamidbar/Numbers 21:4-6 OJB-definitions mine)

Now, we come to the last section of our parasha. Am Yisrael is on the move, but because of the way that YHWH was leading them they became impatient. Immediately, it seems the people *'revert right back'* into the *'spirit of strife'* which has *'so characterized both generations'*. It seems the lessons about *'speaking against YHWH and against His leadership'* were short lived. They bemoan *'having no real bread'* along with the *'lack of water'*, then comes their *'final complaint... their soul loathes the Manna'* YHWH has been providing. As we have seen, it was Moshe and Aharon's *'sinful reaction of ill-advised anger in striking the rock'* that brought YHWH's *'judgment squarely upon themselves'*. The people were not judged then. Now, however, YHWH's *'response to this attack by Am Yisrael on His leadership'* is swift. He sends *'fiery serpents'* among them and many among the people die.

It is interesting to note, that the word *'sent'* in Hebrew here concerning the snakes is, *'sh'lach'*. If you remember, this was part of the title of our earlier Torah parasha on the sending of the leaders to recon The Land... *'Sh'lach L'kha/Send For Yourselves'*. Only here, the word *'sent'* is used in the *'pi'el verb conjugation'* meaning, *'to let go or release'*. The *'implication is'*, that up until this moment, YHWH had *'apparently held these creatures back SO THEY COULDN'T CAUSE Am Yisrael any harm. THEY HAD ALWAYS BEEN THERE!* But now, YHWH's *'protective hand'* was lifted. As a result, there was *'nothing to prevent'* their normal predatory habit. Many of the people died as a result. Again, we see how important it is to use our words to *'speak life'*. Ya'akob/James brings us wisdom on this,

“For where kina [envy] and anochiyut [strife] are, there is tohu 'vavohu (disorder, chaos) and every ra'ah [evil].” (Ya'akob/James 3:16 OJB-definitions mine)

It didn't take too much of this for Am Yisrael to *'come to their senses'*. They realized their sin and came *'confessing that sin'* to Moshe.

“Therefore HaAm [The People] came to Moshe, and said, WE HAVE SINNED, for we have spoken against Hashem [YHWH], and against thee [the Leadership]; pray unto Hashem [YHWH] that He take away the Nachash [Serpent] from us. And Moshe davened [prayed] for the people.” (Bamidbar/Numbers 21:7 OJB- emphasis/definitions mine)

Moshe reassumes his place as a 'true leader'. He goes to YHWH in prayer. In turn, 'he receives instructions' on what to do to 'stop the outbreak' of the snakes. The 'instructions' would also save those who had been bitten and had not died yet.

“And Hashem [YHWH] said unto Moshe, Make thee a fiery serpent, set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moshe made a nachash of nechoshet [serpent of brass/copper], put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a nachash [serpent] had bitten any man, when he beheld the nachash hanechoshet [serpent of brass/copper], then he lived [see Yochanon/John 3:14-15].” (Bamidbar/Numbers 21:8-9 OJB- definitions mine)

YHWH 'instructs Moshe to make a replica of the fiery serpents' that had been let loose and were biting the people. He was to 'make it out of brass' (**picturing judgment**), in order for it to 'resemble the fieriness' of the bite of the actual serpents. Then, he was to 'place it on a pole'. When he 'lifted it up' all who 'looked intently upon it' would live.

We all know that the 'serpent' is first, 'a picture of Hasatan'. ****[May his memory be blotted out forever]** It is alluded to from the outset of the Scriptural record, all the way back to Gan/Garden of Eden. Unfortunately, there are some who, because of 'ignorance of the Torah', have 'erroneously' taken this to mean that our Master Yeshua 'became literal sin' on the 'physical execution stake'. **NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!** ****[There are deeper aspects of this event that we don't have the space to consider here. For more on this, please click on this [**link**](#). It will take you to Torah Parasha #25 'Tzav'. Go to page six... Once there, look for the section in that commentary... 'The Holiness of the Sin Offering']**

Now, in continuing our consideration of the 'serpent on the pole', Master Yeshua Himself alluded to this incident in the Besorah/Gospel of Yochanon/John chapter three verse 14. He says that He is the 'fulfillment' of that which Moshe did and it 'will be understood' when He is 'lifted up on the physical execution stake' at His death. Pay attention to the word 'beheld' in the passage quoted above. The meaning in Hebrew is, 'to gaze, look intently upon'. This is **NOT** a 'fleeting glance'. It is a 'look of enduring contemplation'. Our own 'hope of healing' from all the effects that our sinfulness has brought upon us is to **LOOK AWAY** to our blessed Master Yeshua! That is what the writer of Ivrim/Hebrews was meaning when he wrote,

“LOOKING AWAY to the Initiator and Completer of that trusting [faithfulness], Yeshua — who, in exchange for obtaining the joy set before him, endured execution on a stake as a criminal, scorning the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Ivrim/Hebrews 12:2 CJB- Complete Jewish Bible- emphasis/definition mine)

Am Yisrael had to **LOOK AWAY** to YHWH'S antidote for the poison the death bite of the crawling serpents was bringing... **TO THE SERPENT ON THE POLE!** Those who **KEPT THEIR EYES ON IT** were **DELIVERED** and **LIVED!** We too will be delivered to **LIFE**, when we **LIFT UP OUR EYES**, the 'eyes of our heart' and **KEEP** them on our blessed Master Yeshua, our Sin-Bearer. Amein!

We say the following blessing as we continue each week's study of Torah...

*Chazak u'Barukh...
Strength and Blessings*

****Click the link below to listen to the mp3 audio-reading of our parasha**

Parasha 39: Chukat