



## Parshas Chukas 2019, the process of repentance

*This week's Parsha Perspective was sponsored by the Birman family in memory of Efraim Ben Shaul. May his soul continue to be uplifted and may his memory be blessed.*

Our Parsha picks up in the final years of the Jewish nation's journey in the desert. We begin with Moshe teaching the intricate laws of the Parah Adumah.

The Parah Adumah is a red cow that was never used and is slaughtered as an offering. Then, it is burnt, and its ashes were used to rectify the most severe of ritual impurities, Tum'as Mes, an impurity contracted through interacting with a human corpse.

When a person touches a human corpse, they must use the Parah Adumah ritual to become pure again. This process takes seven days, on which the third and seventh days they must be sprinkled with the ashes of the Parah Adumah.

However, a question comes to mind: at the beginning of this Parsha, when G-d introduces the law to Moshe, he says, (19:2) "זֶאת תִּקְרָא חֻקֵּי הַתּוֹרָה" - *this is the law of the Torah.* Why is this law considered "*the law of the Torah,*" when there are many other laws that better encompass Jewish ideals?

Furthermore, the Torah uses the word "*חֻקֵּי*," which has the same root as *חֻקֵּי*, meaning "*engrave.*" The Alter Rebbe explains this by saying that the laws of Parah Adumah must be engraved in our everyday practice of Judaism. It is an essential concept that is applicable to all times. But the sacrifice of the Parah Adumah can only be performed when there is a Beis Hamikdash standing. In that case, how does this law apply to us today?!

One of the most important core components of Judaism is **Teshuvah, repentance**. G-d is the ultimate mercy in the universe; although the Jews sinned many, many times in the desert, He still forgave them repeatedly.

The Rambam writes in Sefer Madda that Teshuvah includes three stages: **confession, regret, and a vow**.

1. First, a person must **confess** that what they have done is wrong.
2. Next, the person needs to **regret** his decision.
3. Finally, they must make a **vow** that they will never repeat the action again. Once the opportunity to repeat the sin reappears and they decline it, they demonstrate that their Teshuvah was genuine.

Furthermore, he writes: *"Teshuvah can atone for all sins. Even a person who has been wicked his entire life can repent within his final moments, and all his misdeeds will be forgiven."*

The reason why Parah Adumah is the law of the Torah is to teach us, that just as a person who is ritually impure can become pure again. We too can always do Teshuvah and return to G-d.

No matter how far we think we have strayed from G-d, there is always a way to return to him. If we go through the challenging process of confronting our own wrongdoings and working on ourselves, He will happily accept us back with open arms.

In our daily life, we must remember that forgiveness is a hard thing to achieve, but is also difficult to give out. When someone has wronged us, we typically don't want to accept their apologies, no matter how hard they worked to get it.

However, it is essential that we learn to be more forgiving of others. You could either hold the grudge forever, or you could allow yourself the freedom of letting go and moving forward to accomplish bigger and greater achievements.

**"The weak can never forgive, for forgiveness is an attribute of the strong."**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,*

*Rabbi Sholom Yemini*