

Hello again! I hope that everyone who has had exams and who has exams left has much success. However, for now, we can concern ourselves with insulation of hot foods on Shabbat! This week we will continue with the second half of Mishna 4 Perek 3 in Messechet Shabbat.

A Miliarium is a large bowl, which is filled with water and surrounded with hot coals, with the aim to heat the water. If one cleared out all the coals before Shabbat, it may be used to drink from on Shabbat. This is because it is not going to increase the temperature, merely insulate and retain the heat.

This case differs from the Kirah oven from previous Mishnayot (where Chananya (who we

follow) holds that one may leave the oven with food in it over Shabbat, even if the coals are not removed) for a few reasons. The Tosaphot Yom Tov explains that since this Miliarium has coals all round the water it is subject to different laws.

An Antichi may not be used on Shabbat, even if the coals were removed. Regarding a description of an Antichi, Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak holds that it is a pot with two compartments, one on top, for water, and one underneath, for coals. Since the lower part is covered, even after the coals are removed, the heat is trapped and will continue to heat the water.

Have a great Shabbat.

### 'Parasha Digest – Chukat

ראשון: The procedure for a person who has been in contact with a dead person ('tumat met') is detailed. A 'Parah Aduma' (Red cow) is slaughtered then burned and water from a stream is added to the ashes. On the 3rd and 7th days after becoming 'tamei' the mixture is sprinkled on the impure person. Finally, after immersion in a 'Mikveh' on the 7th day a person is once again 'tahir' (pure).

שני: People who are 'tamei' may not enter the Mishkan. Miriam (Moshe's sister) dies during the 40th year of Bnei Yisrael being in the desert. As a result of this, the miraculous well of water dried up and the people complained to Moshe and Aharon.

שלישי: Hashem tells Moshe to gather all of Bnei Yisrael and to speak to a certain rock; instead Moshe hit the rock and out came water. Due to this, Moshe was refused entry to Eretz Yisrael.

רביעי: Moshe sent messengers to ask the King of Edom if Bnei Yisrael could pass through their land, with the promise that they will not harm the land. Edom refused to allow permission and Bnei Yisrael

had to go round and approach Eretz Canaan from the East.

המישי: Bnei Yisrael arrive at 'Har Hor'. Aharon dies and his son Elazar becomes the new Cohen Gadol. Bnei Yisrael mourn for 30 days. Bnei Yisrael are attacked by some of the people who live in the south of Eretz Canaan and they Daven to Hashem that they should win, but they also complain about the Mun, Hashem then sends snakes into the camp and many Jews die. Moshe Davens to Hashem and makes a copper snake and when the Jews who were bitten would look at this snake they would be healed.

ששי: A song of praise for the well which gave Bnei Yisrael water, during their time in the Midbar (desert) is detailed.

שביעי: Bnei Yisrael now asks Sichon King of the Emorites to pass through his land, he refuses and instead attacks Bnei Yisrael and loses. Og King of Bashan then attacks Bnei Yisrael but he is also unsuccessful, Og is killed.

**Shabbat Shalom**



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In the second Passuk of this week's Parasha, Hashem says, "This is the decree of the Torah, which Hashem has commanded...take to you a completely red cow..."  
 Why call this the 'decree of the Torah'? Surely it is much more aptly named, the 'decree of the red cow'?

In order to explain the choice of wording, we must be aware that Hashem gave Bnei Yisrael some commandments prior to Matan Torah. The Civil Laws (punishments for stealing, for example), the instruction to keep Shabbat, the Mitzvah to honour one's parents, and finally, the red cow, were all given at Marah. The aim was to test our forefathers and see if they were ready to take upon themselves all of the other Mitzvot. Then, after we showed we were ready, we received the other Mitzvot, and the detailed laws of those we had already received.

In the Torah, there are three basic categories of commandments.

1. The logical ones which are an inbuilt part of human nature.
2. The ones which no one would have thought of spontaneously, but which once given, can be understood.
3. The decrees which no logic or reason can explain, but we must just follow.

Thus, when Hashem, instructed us at Marah, he gave us sample Mitzvot from each category to allow us to see what kind of things would be in the rest of the Torah.

1. The Civil Laws can be derived from common sense. We see this to the extent that one of the seven Noachide laws is to establish courts and laws. Even without the Torah,

one should be able to work out the logic from the 'Selem Elokim'-the divine spark inside all of humanity.

2. Both the keeping of Shabbat and the honouring of one's parents make much sense when thought about. However, without Hashem telling us to do them, they would never have been invented.
3. Lastly, we know that the reasons for the red cow are hidden, a textbook-example of a decree, which has only ever been revealed once to a mortal-Moshe.

Based on this, says the Ozneyim LaTorah, we can understand why the Passuk calls this the decree of the Torah. What Hashem is saying is that what follows are the details of the decree which I showed you as the example of a typical Torah decree.

However, why are we unable to know the reasons behind this Mitzvah, and what about Moshe made him the only man to understand it?

The Ma'ayan Bet HaShoevah explains that the Parah Aduma is used to purify one who has been made Tameh through contact with a dead body. Therefore, it is connected with the deep secrets of what happens after one's soul has departed. As humans, with both a body and a Neshama, we are unable to hear such information.

Only Moshe Rabeinu was taught these secrets because, when receiving the Torah he had fasted for forty days and was comparable to the angels. His body and soul were sufficiently separate to allow him to understand these secrets.

**Shabbat Shalom**

## The Significance of the Individual

The *Mashgiach* of the Kamenitz Yeshivah in Yerushalayim, Harav Moshe Aaron Stern, related that he once attended the Bar Mitzvah of one of the students at the Kamenitz elementary school. The day of the Bar Mitzvah was one of freezing rain and heavy winds. The affair took place in the Katamon section of the city, quite a distance from other *Chareidi* neighborhoods.

When he arrived, he noticed a taxi pulling up, and heard the feeble voice of an elderly man asking for help in exiting from the car. Rav Stern rushed over and helped him. Once on the street, he discerned that the gentleman was walking to the hall with some difficulty. Suddenly, he realized that the elderly man was no other than Harav Chaim Shmulevitz, the eminent *Rosh Yeshivah* of the Mirrer Yeshivah.

That day happened to be a very taxing one for the *Rosh Yeshivah*. A memorial assembly had been held for Harav Mendel Zaks, in which Rav Chaim had been the keynote speaker. In addition, he had given his weekly Talmud lecture to the entire student body that evening, an exertion of mammoth proportions for a man whose very lifeblood was the exacting dissemination of Torah.

The Kamenitz *Mashgiach*, noticing the sheer fatigue of Rav Chaim, asked him why, after an especially exhausting day, he found it necessary to travel in inclement weather to attend the Bar Mitzvah.

“Let me explain it to you,” Rav Chaim answered in a contemplative tone. “The Bar Mitzvah boy’s father attends my *mussar* sessions regularly. I feel I owe him a debt of gratitude

for his trouble in traveling weekly -- in all weather conditions -- from distant Katamon, just to hear my lecture. I feel that the proper thing for me to do is to reciprocate, disregarding the distance and the elements, and participate in his *simchah*.”

“I beg the *Rosh Yeshivah*’s pardon,” the *Mashgiach* said, “but you are well aware that the crowds at the weekly *mussar shiur* are by far greater than the capacity of the auditorium. Whoever finds a seat considers himself a lucky man. Why do you feel a debt of gratitude to a person who participates in one of the most popular lectures in all of *Yerushalayim*?”

Rav Chaim explained that our Sages’ explanation of wealth, whereby “a penny and another penny ... add up to a large sum,” is also valid regarding people: a crowd is merely an aggregation of many individuals, and if we overlook the significance of the single *Yid*, we have disregarded the entire crowd.

“You must view this in the right perspective,” Rav Chaim explained. “Imagine if the father of the Bar Mitzvah boy would not participate, and then another and yet another person would ignore my lectures. To whom would I deliver my *mussar* message? Every single participant makes it possible for the lecture to happen, and each one adds to the atmosphere of *yiras Shomayim*. Should that not be cause enough for paying them a minimum debt of gratitude, by attending their *simchos*?” he asked rhetorically.

(Taken from ‘Noble Lives Noble Deeds’, Dovid Silber)

### Thought for the Week

Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer was sitting with a group of students when one of them announced that a leading Torah Scholar was coming. Rabbi Meltzer prepared his modest apartment to greet the esteemed guest. Suddenly there was a knock. R’Meltzer rushed to the door to greet the honoured guest. However there was no great rabbi. Instead a simple Jew stood there asking to collect money. R’Meltzer rushed the man inside and gave him the respect he would have given to a great Rabbi. After the man had left, Rav Zalman commented, “Who really knows how to evaluate the value of people? Perhaps this is the way one must treat every Jew.”

## The Tree of Life and Knowledge

“This is the teaching regarding a man who would die in the tent” (19:14)

In a Gemara in Berachot 63a a statement is made in relation to the above Pasuk which seems, when read literally, not to make much sense: “the Torah will endure only with those people who kill themselves for it”. In Vayikra 18:5 the Torah clearly states that its laws are those *by which he shall live* and not die. We are to live according to the Torah, not, God forbid to die as a result of our adhering to its precepts. It is only in the case of the three cardinal sins; murder, illicit relations and idolatry that we are commanded to forfeit our lives.

There are various homiletical explanations given to this quandary:

The Chafetz Chaim explains that every person has a hundred reasons why they are too busy to learn or do a mitzvah right now. One can be busy all his life. The only way to be sure that we tend to the needs of our souls is to imagine that we are dead. Just as it is impossible to bother a dead man, so we must carve out precious time in our day for serious prayer and Torah study. Our friends, families and business associates will be thrilled when we ‘come back to life’ again and rejoin them.

R’Meir Shapiro sees this teaching as a call for single-minded dedication in educating our children to follow the path of the Torah. The Torah will only endure with those who figuratively kill themselves for it, placing their children’s spiritual achievements and commitment to Torah above everything else in their lives.

According to the Sfas Emes, the message relates to personal growth through Torah. One must be willing to kill himself for Torah knowledge and spiritual growth, for without it, life has no value. Those who are ready to forgo physical comforts and invest their time and energies in the pursuit of Torah study ‘kill themselves for Torah’. It is these people who most vividly experience life and discover that Torah provides vibrant life to those who cling to it.

Indeed in Mishlei (3:18) Shlomo describes the Torah as a *tree of life for those who grasp it*. What does it mean by a *tree of life*?

Imagine you fell off a cliff and were plummeting towards certain death. Suddenly, out of the corner of your eye, you notice a branch growing from the side of the mountain. At the last moment you reach out and grab the branch, holding on for dear life. This, taught R’Chaim Volozhiner, is what Shlomo meant. Without Torah we are plummeting towards spiritual oblivion. We must hold onto Torah with our last vestiges of strength. Without it, we are finished.

R’SR Hirsch in his commentary on the Pasuk in Mishlei tells us that the *Etz Chaim* in the middle of Gan Eden is no longer accessible. We have forfeited it because the *Etz Daat*, while standing next to it, was yet separate, and we wanted to pluck the fruits of its knowledge against God’s will. By giving us His Torah, granting wisdom and understanding, God has, however, given into our hands the tree of knowledge *and* the tree of life, united into one. Wherever we tend it, lovingly and faithfully, we may earn both the fruits of knowledge and the fruits of eternal life. This becomes doubly so when a community gathers around this tree of life; they become *Tomchei’hah*, the supporters and followers are taken from plurality and transformed into unity. When we are all truly united around God and His Torah we become one harmonious unit. However when this single beam of support, the Torah, is lacking then every society, union, or community becomes mere pretence, held together only outwardly, but inwardly divided by the diverging interests of separate pluralists.

We should strive as a school (and as a community) to truly push ourselves, to *kill ourselves* in our efforts to position Torah in its deserved place. May we all merit to become *Tomchei’hah* around the Torah.

**Shabbat Shalom**

### Riddle for the Week

When is one food permitted to be eaten when outside one’s house, but forbidden when brought home?  
(Note: there may be multiple answers- how many can you think of?)

(Answer in next week’s Living Torah)