

Bamidbar Chapter 19 - Transcript

Shiur Overview

Summary: Bamidbar Chapter 19 — Parah Adumah (The Red Cow)

Context and Placement in Sefer Bamidbar

This chapter is the last mitzvah in a series that established the hierarchy of kohanim, leviyim, and the rest of Israel — their roles, levels of access to the mishkan, and related gifts (matnos kehunah). Chapter 19, however, doesn't fit neatly into that theme. It's not about hierarchy or access levels per se.

The Ramban's connection: The word "hakohen" appears repeatedly (the Midrash counts nine times), emphasizing that the kohen is in charge of this purification process. This ties it to the broader theme: the kohen is responsible for **mishmeres hamishkan** — guarding who may and may not enter. But the kohen's role is not only exclusionary. As established with the concept of **avodas matanah**, the kohen also takes responsibility for bringing people **in** — through blessings, and here, through creating the **mei chatas** (purification waters) that allow someone who became tamei through contact with a dead body to become pure again.

A broader structural observation: This parsha is really an appendix to the tuma and tahara sections of Sefer Vayikra. In Tazria-Metzora, purification processes for the **tzaruah** (leper) and **zav** are detailed. The **tamei lanefesh** (one impure through a corpse) is mentioned in several places — sent out of the camp in Parshas Naso/Behaalosecha, prohibited for kohanim in Emor, prohibited for a nazir in Naso — but the actual purification process is never given until here. It's unclear why this was deferred, since even the metzora's complex process appears in Vayikra.

Possible thematic reasons for placement here:

1. The parah adumah ritual is performed **michutz lamachaneh** (outside the camp), connecting to Sefer Bamidbar's overarching theme of expansion outward — extending kedushah to the edges and beyond the camp.
2. After the challenges to the camp's structure (Shelach, Korach), this represents working with what is **outside** the machaneh, even purifying the most extreme form of impurity — contact with death.
3. Death represents being entirely outside the community; the parah adumah reaches all the way out to address that.

The Nature of the Korban (Pesukim 1–4)

The parsha has two major parts: (1) the **ma'aseh parah** — creating the purification substance, and (2) the **halachos taharas tumas meis** — laws of corpse-impurity purification.

The parah adumah as a type of chatas: It is not a standard korban. It functions similarly to the **chataos hanisrafos** (sin-offerings that are burned). Generally, korbanos serve **kapparah** (atonement) or **simcha** (celebration, as with a zevach). But certain korbanos also purify — like the **korbanos hamiluim** or the korbanos of a nazir or yoledes (**mechusarei kapparah**). The parah adumah goes further: the korban itself — its ash — becomes the purifying agent, the "detergent."

Pasuk 2 — "Zos chukas haTorah": The word **chukah** means something like "the set ritual order" — a fixed procedure. **Torah** means "teaching" (as in Toras Kohanim). This is a header formula found in multiple parshiyos.

The red cow's requirements:

- **Adumah** — red, probably symbolizing blood.
- **Tmimah** — whole/unblemished; the Chachamim interpret this as fully red, but the peshat is simply **ein bah mum** (no blemish), the standard for any korban.
- **Asher lo alah aleha ol** — never bore a yoke; it must not be a work animal but entirely fresh, fully dedicated to this purpose (similar to the *eglah arufah*).

Pasuk 3 — Given to Elazar HaKohen: The tzibbur (community) brings it and gives it to Elazar specifically — not Aharon. This may reflect a period when Aharon was older, with the kehunah already transitioning to Elazar.

The Procedure of the Parah Adumah

Slaughter and Blood Sprinkling (Pesukim 3–4)

The parah is taken outside the camp and slaughtered. The phrase **veshachat osah lefanav** ("he will slaughter it before him") suggests that someone else may perform the actual slaughter while the kohen supervises or bears ritual responsibility. The kohen then takes the blood and sprinkles it seven times toward the **penei ohel moed** — in the direction of the ohel moed, but not literally on the paroches. This distinguishes it from the other **chatas hanisrafos**, whose blood is sprinkled inside the mishkan or even brought into the kodesh hakodashim. Here the sprinkling is outward, merely oriented toward the ohel moed from outside.

The seven sprinklings symbolically purify the mikdash from tumas meis. Since the kedushah of the mishkan extends to the entire camp, anyone who is tamei meis within the camp effectively touches and contaminates the mikdash. The blood of the parah adumah thus purifies the mikdash itself.

Burning and the Three Ingredients (Pesukim 5–6)

After the blood sprinkling, the entire cow is burned — skin, flesh, blood, intestines, everything at once — just like all **paros hanisrafos**. Into the fire the kohen throws three ingredients: **etz erez** (cedar wood), **eizov** (a type of grass/hyssop), and **shni tola'as** (red wool, the same material used in the mishkan). These same ingredients appear in the purification of the metzora and echo what was done in Mitzrayim with the korban pesach — all contexts of purification. This completes the **ma'aseh parah**, the act of creating the purifying substance.

The Tumah of Those Involved — Not a True Paradox (Pesukim 7–10)

The kohen becomes tamei from performing this process. This is famously called the "paradox" of the parah adumah — that which purifies others makes its handler impure. But this is not really paradoxical: it is like a detergent that cleans something but itself becomes dirty in the process. The person handling the parah is essentially touching "dirt," so naturally he becomes contaminated. He must wash his clothes and body and remains tamei until evening — the status of **tvul yom**

(one who has immersed but must wait until day's end). The same applies to anyone else who assisted in the process, as *veshachat osah lefanav* implies helpers beyond the kohen.

The Third Person: Gathering the Ashes (Pasuk 9)

After the burning is complete, a **third step** involves a pure person who gathers the ashes and deposits them in a pure place outside the camp. These ashes are kept under watch (*mishmeres*) and are called *mei niddah* (water of sprinkling) or *mei chatas* — the purifying waters. This third person also becomes tamei with the same halachah as the previous participants.

The Laws of Purification from Tumas Meis

The Basic Rule: Seven Days and Sprinkling on the Third Day (Pesukim 11–13)

One who touches a dead person is tamei for a minimum of seven days — but unlike some forms of tumah, purification is **not automatic**. The person must be sprinkled with the mei niddah on the third day, and then on the seventh day he becomes pure. The Chachamim understand that sprinkling is required on both the third and seventh days, depending on how one reads the pasuk: either *bayom hashlishi uvayom hashvi'i* (sprinkle on both days) or *bayom hashlishi... uvayom hashvi'i yithar* (sprinkle on the third, become pure on the seventh).

The key principle: without the sprinkling on the third day, purification on the seventh day does not occur. This contrasts with a niddah (arguably automatic after seven days) or a tvul yom (who becomes pure at evening after immersion). Here, active purification is required.

Punishment: One who becomes tamei meis and fails to purify himself contaminates the mishkan and receives karet.

Two Parts of the Chapter: Chukah and Torah (Pasuk 14 — *Zot HaTorah*)

The chapter divides into two sections reflecting its opening title *chukas hatorah*: the **chukah** portion (the mysterious ritual procedure) and the **torah** portion (the practical

instructions about who becomes impure and how). The phrase *zot hatorah* introduces this second, instructional section.

Expanded Sources of Tumah (Pesukim 14–16)

Beyond touching a corpse, tumah extends to:

- **Ohel ha-meis:** Anyone present in the same tent as a dead person becomes tamei, as do all vessels inside — but **only open vessels**. A vessel with a tightly sealed cover (*tzamid pasil*) is protected; the tumah does not penetrate it.

- **In the field:** Relevant especially in wartime (implemented later in milchemes Midian). Touching a *chalal cherev* (one killed by sword), a person who died naturally, human bones, or a grave — all produce seven-day tumah with the same purification requirement.

The Sprinkling Procedure in Detail (Pesukim 17–19)

More detailed instructions emerge for the actual sprinkling: fresh *mayim chayim* (living water from a spring) is placed in a vessel. A **new** eizov — not the one burned with the parah — is dipped into the water and used to sprinkle on whatever needs purification: the ohel, objects within it, people within it, or anyone who touched a bone, corpse, or grave. This closely parallels the eizov-sprinkling in Mitzrayim.

The Fourth Person: The Maze (Pesukim 19–21)

The **maze** (sprinkler) is a fourth distinct role in the process: kohen, sofer (burner), osef (gatherer of ashes), and mazeh. The mazeh must be pure, and he too becomes tamei from performing the sprinkling.

Chain of Tumah and Final Summary (Pasuk 22)

The chapter concludes with a summary of transmitted tumah: one who touches a dead person is tamei; the next person that tamei person touches also becomes tamei — but this secondary contact produces tumah only until evening (*ad ha'erev*), not the full seven-day tumah. The punishment for failing to purify and entering the mikdash is repeated: contamination of the mishkan and continued tumah.

The entire framework is designated *chukas olam* — a permanent, ongoing ordinance, not a one-time event.

Full Transcript

Bamidbar Chapter 19: The Parah Adumah and Purification from Corpse Impurity

Introduction: Context and Timing

Today we're reading Bamidbar chapter 19, interestingly being recorded on Erev Shabbos Parah where we read this chapter precisely. But now we're reading it in the context of Sefer Bamidbar so we have to talk a minute about the context.

The Placement of Chapter 19 Within Sefer Bamidbar

The Preceding Series of Mitzvos

As we've discussed, this Sefer Bamidbar has these groups of mitzvos, right? We just came from a group of mitzvos which we explained very well yesterday, how it really is connected with the answer to the question, the establishment of the hierarchy of the kohanim and the leviyim and everyone else in a way in which we can understand by giving this story and explaining how this is really all in response to certain challenges, to certain questions.

But now, this is the last mitzvah in this series. There's one more mitzvah that seems to not connect to that, although

there is one way in which it's connected as the Ramban notes here, but it seems not to be connected with that. It's not about like matnas kehunah, it's not establishing the hierarchy, the levels of access to the Mishkan and things like that—that's not what it's doing.

The Ramban's Connection: The Role of the Kohen

One thing in which it might be connected—I don't know if this is entirely peshat, but what the Ramban says—it's connected in one way, which is that the kohen is mentioned here a lot. And also I think the Midrash counted it, it says nine times **hakohen**, so there seems to be a point in which the kohen is in charge of this, and this may be interesting, maybe it's important, maybe it's part of the whole thing.

If we connect it with this context, we'll say something like: the Mishkan, the Mikdash is protected from impure people or not purified people, not holy people accessing it. One of the main ways in which it's protected by that is—right, in general, even when he is pure, a Yisroel or someone who is not authorized, not a kohen cannot go, but even a kohen or even in the ways in which a Yisroel could go, when he is impure, when he is tamei

lanefesh, especially, he cannot go as we've learned in Parshas Behaalosecha, and as we just learned, the one in charge of that is really the kohen. The kohen is the one in charge of mishmeres hamishkan, right? They have to watch that nobody who doesn't belong should be able to go into the Mishkan, and that's the job of the kohen.

And here we give the kohen also the other side of the job. So that's maybe the nice thing, like we've been saying: the kohen is not only the one in charge of the harsh hierarchical structure, he's also in charge of making sure that—taking the responsibility for who will come and taking responsibility for the people that will not come and giving them blessings. So maybe in this sense, the kohen is the one who is creating this taharah, this mechatas, which will purify the one who is tamei lanefesh, the one who was impurified, became not pure by touching a dead body. That's the kohen in charge.

A New Type of Purification

And this is interesting, because there's different ways of becoming pure. We learned in Parshas Tazria, there's **kibbos begadim** [washing of garments], or going to the mikveh, which are washing with water, as the Torah calls it, and those are things that it's not the kohen's responsibility. It's just, you know, whoever wants to become purified, he has to go to the mikveh, he has to get purified in whichever way he gets purified.

Here there's a new kind of purification, which the kohen—it's the kohen's job to do it. Of course, it's not entirely the only one that's like this, because this connects really to a series of purifications that work through korbanos, through a kind of korban.

The Structure: Two Parts

So I think that that's the simple meaning of this whole story, so we see that there's two parts in it really. The first part is the hakravah, the kind of korban—it's not entirely a korban, it works more like a chatas, chatas hanisrefes. In any case, a kind of shechitah, a kind of korban, which then, what is left from that korban, the ash from that korban, becomes the purification. But it's for sure true still that the shechitah is a korban, and the whole process of sort of creating this **efer parah** [ash of the cow], it's a kind of chatas, let's just call the chatas over here, it's a kind of chatas, which is similar to the chatas, all the chataos hanisrefes, which over there we sprinkle their blood in the mizbe'ach and so on.

But they all have a similar logic where there's a korban that causes also a purification. Generally korbanos are not for purification, they're for something called kapparah, atonement, or for a simchah, like a zevach, things like that. But there are certain korbanos, like the korbanos of miluim, which are also—were done in this book, again in Parshas, well no, mostly in Parshas Sefer Vayikra—but the korbanos of miluim, which are also, their job, or part of their job is to purify. So in a similar way, this is a korban whose job is to purify.

Of course also a nazir has a korban like this, or a yoledes, that are what's called mechusarei kapparah. Some tumos need also a korban to purify them, just bringing a korban. But here it's not just bringing a korban, it's that the korban itself becomes somehow the—we call the detergent, the thing that purifies you. So that's this parsha.

Why This Mitzvah Appears Here Rather Than in Vayikra

And that's one way of connecting it to where we're coming from. Ramban says this, he says that it belongs here because it's all, to tell us that it's all a kohen that does it. But in a broader sense this is just really an appendix to the parshas of tumah v'taharah, which are really in Sefer Vayikra.

Even the halachos of this tumah—this is an interesting thing—in Tazria and Metzora we had, like I mentioned, the tzarua, zav and tamei lanefesh are a set that are mentioned in Parshas Naso when we send them out of the camp. And now, sorry, in Behaalosecha when we send them out of the camp we have this three sets. So tzarua, zav, those are things that their way of purification is mentioned explicitly in Parshas Tazria and in Parshas Metzora. But tamei lanefesh, what we call tamei lanefesh, is not mentioned. It's mentioned that it is impure, we mentioned also that a kohen in Parshas Emor we discussed that a kohen is not allowed to ever touch it, we mentioned it about a nazir in the same way in Parshas Naso, that a nazir doesn't become impure or nefesh, but we did not mention how to purify it. And this is the only place where the purification of that is mentioned.

So it's sort of the wrong place, possibly because it's a longer, complicated process, although the metzora is also a complicated process. It's there, it's not clear why it's here.

Thematic Reasons for Placement in Bamidbar

So maybe the reason that I gave is a reason, or could have to do also with the idea of the expansion that we discussed, that this is the expansion. And in some sense tamei lanefesh is like the furthest, right? Remember, being entirely dead is being not part of the community, unless you're dead in a way in which you stay part of the community. But in any case, in some sense, and this parah adumah is also something done **michutz lamachaneh** [outside the camp]—the shechitah, the sreifah, all that is done michutz lamachaneh.

So this might have to do in another way, and it has to do with the general theme of Sefer Bamidbar, which is expanding, expand all the way to the edge of the machaneh. We can also see in some sense, like the story of Korach, or the stories of the challenges to the machaneh, right, the challenge—Shelach, Korach—these are all challenges to the machaneh, to the structure of the machaneh. And therefore in sort of being metaphor, sort of working with what's outside, and now it goes all the way outside, michutz lamachaneh, and can even purify that. So that's another way of saying it.

Reading the Pesukim: The Ma'aseh Parah

So anyways, let's read. So as we said, there's two parts. The first part is the creation, the ma'aseh parah, and then the second part is the hilchos tumas meis, or the hilchos taharan tumas meis.

Pasuk 1-2: The Introduction and Requirements

So first we have Hashem speaking to Moshe and Aharon, and this is, it's headers, this is the law—I think chukah doesn't mean, the law means something like the ritual, the order that is always a set order, it's called the chukah, or the seder, the order of the—and Torah is a teaching, like Torah is Kohanim, with many parts with the header Torah. So that's I think **chukas haTorah** [the ritual law of the Torah]. I've written about this at length, to explain chukas haTorah. Chukas Torah says one more time also in Sefer Bamidbar, and this is what Hashem commanded.

Speak to the Bnei Yisrael, they'll do this, they'll give you, they should bring you a **parah adumah** [red cow], a red cow. So that's the—of course that's—the parshah is named after the redness, parah adumah. It's very important that it should be red, probably to symbolize blood or something like that.

It should be whole, **tmimah** [unblemished], right? Now tmimum, that's every korban is like that, and it explains **tmimah asher ein bah mum** [unblemished, which has no defect in it]. There's the Chachamim understand tmimah to be something to do with the redness—it should be fully red. But I think literally it's just the same thing as **ein bah mum** [no defect in it].

And **asher lo alah aleha ol** [upon which no yoke has been placed], also we have something similar by the eglah arufah. So a parah that has not had a yoke on it. So if it had a yoke, it's like it's a work animal. We don't want a work animal, we want something that is a fresh parah, so it's entirely sacrificed to this, it's entirely dedicated to this.

Pasuk 3: Given to Elazar HaKohen

And they will take it—so again this is also a structure that we have many times here by Hashem as Isaac, by other things, the people, it's sort of their responsibility to bring it, and they give it to Elazar HaKohen. So again Elazar HaKohen, that's also interesting. We discussed yesterday, in the previous chapter, Aharon HaKohen. This chapter, this story seems to be given in a time when Aharon HaKohen is already older, or less capable of doing everything, so it's Elazar. Of course, maybe Elazar was always helping him, but there's some aspect of the giving over of the kehunah to Elazar already over here I think.

And what will Elazar do? He will take out this parah to the outside of the camp, and he will, **v'shachat otah lefanav** [and slaughter it before him]—he will slaughter it in front of him, apparently someone else will slaughter it in front of him, or he will slaughter it in front of the camp, or something like that.

Pasuk 4: The Sprinkling of the Blood

And then what he will do is, take the dam, as I said, it's very similar to all the chataos hanisrefes, which we take their blood and we sprinkle it on the paroches, or towards the paroches. Here he's not doing it literally on the paroches, it already starts, other than the regular chataos hanisrefes, which you sprinkle the blood inside—even the opposite, some of them get even brought inside the kodesh hakodashim. This one, he's sprinkling the blood towards, towards the **penei Ohel Moed** [facing the Tent of Meeting], towards the side of the Ohel Moed, but not there, just like in that direction.

So seven times, seven times is the amount of all these kinds of sprinklings. In some sense what this means is that symbolically it's purifying the Mikdash from the tumas meis, since the Mikdash also would have become impure at least if someone with a tumah would go there, or in general, since the kedoshim—

[End of chunk 1]

The Slaughter and Blood Sprinkling

Apparently someone else will slaughter it in front of him, or he will slaughter it in front of the camp or something like that. And then what he will do is take the dam [blood], as I said it's very similar to all the chatos and esrefes [sin offerings that are burned], which we take their blood and we sprinkle it on the paroches [the curtain] or towards the paroches. Here he's not

doing it literally on the paroches — it already starts, other than the regular chatos and esrefes, which you sprinkle the blood inside, even the opposite, some of them get even brought inside the kodesh hakodashim [Holy of Holies]. This one he's sprinkling the blood towards, towards the pnei ohel moed [the face of the Tent of Meeting], towards the side of the pnei ohel moed, but not there, just like in that direction.

So seven times, seven times is the amount of all these kinds of sprinklings. In some sense what this means is symbolically it's purifying the mikdash [sanctuary] from the tumas meis [impurity of death], since the mikdash also would have become impure, at least if someone was a tamei [impure person] would go there, or in general, since the kedushah [holiness] of the mishkan [tabernacle] spreads to the whole camp, so anyone that's a tamei meis, somehow that touches the mikdash and makes it impure. So also the mikdash is getting purified by this blood, by the seven times of the sprinkling of the blood of the parah adumah [red heifer], so the zrikas dam [sprinkling of blood].

The Burning and the Three Ingredients

And then he burns it, like all the paros hanisrafos [cows that are burned], he burns the whole thing, all of it — its skin, its flesh, its blood, all of it, its insides, its intestines, it burns all of it, all at once. And then he does something that reminds us of what we did in Mitzrayim [Egypt], by the korban Pesach [Passover offering], reminds us of what we do for Mitzrayim, so again, these seem to be things that have to do with purification.

He takes these three ingredients: etz erez [cedar wood], wood of an erez tree; eizov [hyssop], some kind of grass or some kind of specific kind of grass; and shni tola'as [crimson wool] — shni tola'as we have also in the mishkan, reds, some kind of red wool — and he throws them together, so he burns it along with these ingredients. And that's basically the process of creation. That's the ma'aseh parah [the act of the red heifer], and then the kohen [priest] from doing this becomes impure.

The "Paradox" of the Parah — Not Really a Paradox

And of course it's famously said to be a paradox of parah, but it's not really a paradox, because like, if you take a detergent and you wash something, and then the thing that you washed with becomes dirty. That's just how life works. It's very normal. It's a very normal thing. So, in the same way, the person that touches this, like, touching dirt, so he gets dirty, so therefore, he washes his clothes, he washes himself, and then he can come back to the camp, and until the evening he will be tamei, so this is what we call tvul yom [one who has immersed but awaits evening], so in other words, he is purified, but he still has to wait until the end of the day, because in some sense, like, the day became impure for him.

So that's the kohen, and now we see that the kohen himself didn't do all of this, as we said, he supervised it, or he's the one responsible ritually for it, but he's not the only one, there might be other people helping, the same thing for them, they have to do the same things.

The Third Person: Gathering the Ashes

So now, there's another step, now, after this whole process was done, after the parah was slaughtered, it was burnt, and the people taking care of that would finish that out, finish their part of the work, now we have a third person — it might have been the same person, but there's a third step — after it's all

burnt, a pure person comes and gathers the ashes of the parah, and he puts it in a pure place outside of the machaneh [camp], and now it becomes mishmeres [something watched over there], we call it mei niddah [water of sprinkling], water of sprinkling, water that we sprinkle, chatas [sin offering], mei niddah or mei chatas [water of purification], both names of this thing, these are waters that will purify other things.

Now this person, this third person, also the same thing, he becomes tamei, he has the same halachah [law] as the previous two people. Now this will become a law forever, for the Bnei Yisrael [Children of Israel], for any strangers, any that live within them, will be the same law, this will be.

The Laws of Purification: Seven Days and Required Sprinkling

So now we have the story of how we made this ingredient, this thing, mei niddah, mei chatas, and now we're going to learn what we do with it, right? So what we're going to learn is, if someone touches a dead person, he will be impure for seven days, and what that means is a minimum of seven days really, because he doesn't just automatically become pure after seven days, unlike maybe some other things which might happen that way, but no, he has to, his chatas, he has to be cleaned with this mei niddah on the third day, and therefore on the seventh day he will become purified, that's the literal way of reading it.

The chachamim [sages] understand that we have to sprinkle also on the seventh day, but that depends on how you read this passage, either **bayom hashlishi uvayom hashvi'i** [on the third day and on the seventh day], or **bayom hashlishi uvayom hashvi'i yithar** [on the third day and on the seventh day he will be purified]. In any case, if you will not sprinkle on the third day, then you will not become pure on the seventh day. I think this is really saying what I just said — there are some things, maybe a niddah [menstruant], again, can be discussed, after seven days they automatically become pure, no, it's not, or like someone before, the evening he becomes pure, of course, if he washed himself during the day, so there is also something he has to do. In the same way here, if you do the mei niddah, then on the seventh day you become pure, otherwise you don't.

The Punishment for Failing to Purify

And there we have a punishment, if you do this, you touch a dead person, and you did not purify yourself, then you metamei es hamishkan [defile the sanctuary], and you get karet [spiritual excision], because you did not purify yourself with the mei niddah, and you are still impure, so that's the law of how the purification of the tumas meis works.

The Two Parts: Chukah and Torah

We still didn't learn the laws of what is, who becomes impure, how it becomes impure, or what else becomes impure, and that's the second part, so this is the law, maybe we could understand that until now it's chukas [statute], like it said **chukas olam** [eternal statute], and now it's the torah part, so there's two parts, chukas o torah [statute or teaching], there's the chukah part, and the torah part, and the torah is just the instructions of who becomes impure and how, and therefore we'll need this purification.

Expanded Sources of Tumah

Tumah in an Ohel [Tent]

So before we just learned about someone who touches, now we're going to learn that not only someone who touches, but also someone who is in the same tent, the same ohel as the dead person, then he becomes impure, anyone who, any person who is in the ohel, or anything, any vessels, anything in it. Now specifically which vessels, only open ones, only an open vessel which doesn't have a closed cover, tightly closed on it, that becomes tumah, but if it's closed, then sort of like the tumah doesn't go into it.

Tumah in the Field

Now this is not only a way of becoming impure in a tent, that's one way if someone dies in a tent, but sometimes people die outside, especially in war, they die in the field, we'll see later in the story of milchemes Midian [the war with Midian], but that's the implementation of this halachah. So if you touch a dead person in the field, whether it was a chalal cherev [one slain by the sword], someone was killed by the sword in a war, or just someone died, or a third way in which someone might find a dead person in the field, if he doesn't find a dead person, he finds the bones of a dead person, or a grave of a dead person also, those graves are usually in the field. So also, you will have the same halachah, you will be impure for seven days, and they will do the same exact thing, they will take this efer [ashes] of the, here it's called the afar [dust], like the sand, but it's the same thing, it means the ashes.

The Detailed Sprinkling Procedure

And now we have some more instructions of how it's done, interestingly, before that we just said yizchatu [they shall sprinkle], and now it gives you more details of how you do it. You put fresh water, mayim chayim [living water], water from a living source, from a spring, into a vessel, and you take an eizov, again, not the same eizov that was burnt in it, a new eizov, and you dip it into the water, and with that you sprinkle it on whoever needs to be sprinkled.

Again this entirely reminds us of what we did in Mitzrayim, where we sprinkled with an eizov, and it gives you water, and it adds, the pasuk [verse] tells you, we sprinkle it on all these things that we just discussed, the ohel, or the things that were in the ohel, or the people that were in the ohel, or someone who touched a bone, or a dead person, or killed a dead person, or just a dead person, or a grave.

The Fourth Person: The Mazeh [Sprinkler]

And it has to be done by a pure person, so this is the fourth person, right, we had the kohen, we had the sores [burner], we had the osef [gatherer], and now we have the mazeh, the person who sprinkles the water, he also has to be pure, and he will also become impure, right, same thing, the person who is mazeh also becomes impure, that's what it says here at least.

Final Summary: Chain of Tumah and Punishment

And again we have this repeat of the punishment if you don't, so in other words it includes all these details, if you are impure in any of these ways, and you did not purify yourself, the same thing, you go to the mikdash, you are still tumah, and all of this is again, a continuous order, it's not something that was just once.

And here we have these four people, a summary of these four people who become impure: the one who sprinkles the water, the one who touches it, so that's another thing, someone who touches it, or anyone who an impure person touches also becomes tumah, so if you touch a dead person then you

yourself become tumah, the next person you touch becomes tumah, but the person who touches that is not tumah forever, only until the evening. And that's the simple meaning of this parashah [Torah portion], and that's how we finish this parashah.

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