



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem



This Issue Contains:

1. How Now Red Cow?
2. Yiddle Riddle

Here are but a sample of many questions that our readers have recently sent to "Ask the Rabbi" about the apparent discovery of a Red Heifer in Israel:

B. H. Moore < jayne@ieway.com > from Spokane Washington wrote:

The National news media reported that a red heifer was born in Israel which has some bearing on the future Temple. Could you explain the significance of this?

We have seen reports of what may be a Para Aduma. Is there any basis to this claim, & if yes, what may be the implications of the existence of a Red Heifer.

soon. Is there any reason to believe this? Thank you in advance.

Lou Brifman < lbrifm02@sprynet.com > wrote: Dear Rabbi, Please discuss the Parah Adumah and its significance today.

Fábio, Alexandre, Juliano, Rafael and Mariângela < rachel.santos@merconet.com.br > from Brazil wrote:

Please, we want to know about the red cow that was born in Kfar Hassidim, and the connection with the restoration of the Temple and the Meshiah. Thank you.

Peter Crowson < pcrowson@succeed.net > from Live Oak, California wrote:

What is the significance of the red heifer. How was it different from all the other sacrifices?

The Farber Family < farberj@thrasher.co.za > from South Africa wrote:

Would you please explain to us the significance of a "Red Heifer" born in Yerushalayim?

David Waysman < dwaysman@melbpc.org.au > from Australia wrote:

Mitch Klausner < mklausner@juno.com > wrote:

In the Boston Globe a few weeks ago, on the front page of the Sunday edition was a picture of a red heifer found in Israel. Apparently it is very rare to find such an animal. The article said that some believe this means Mashiach is coming

Lester < lester@pan-tex.net > from Pampa, Texas wrote:

Dear Rabbi, What about the flawless Red Heifer?

Dear Readers,

As rare as it may be, the birth of a red heifer is nothing more than a curiosity. There is no source in Jewish tradition that sees the birth of a red heifer as a sign of the arrival of the *Mashiach*.

According to the Torah, someone who comes into contact with a dead body becomes halachically 'impure.' The Torah describes a very specific process that enables a person to purify himself. This process involves slaughtering a heifer which is completely red, burning it and mixing its ashes with water. Some of this 'purifying water' is sprinkled on the impure person twice over a seven-day period.

This had great practical importance during Temple times, because all participants in the Temple service needed to be ritually pure, and the entire nation needed to purify themselves for the Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot festivals. It will have practical significance again when the Temple is rebuilt.

Maimonides writes that from the time of Moses until the destruction of the Second Temple, only nine red heifers have been used to prepare the 'purifying waters.' The tenth red heifer, says Maimonides, will be prepared by the *Mashiach*.

This can be easily misunderstood. It does not mean that there existed only nine red heifers in history, and that the tenth one to be born will be used by the *Mashiach*. It simply means that the ashes from each heifer lasted a long time, and there was never a need to prepare more than nine. The tenth red heifer process will take place in the times of the *Mashiach*.

About twenty years ago, a red heifer born in Israel caused a similar stir. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the noted halachic authority of the time, was unmoved. "One of the requirements of the red heifer is that it be at least two years old. What if the *Mashiach* were to come tomorrow? Would we have to wait two years in order to become pure? When *Mashiach* comes, they'll find a red heifer that's two-years old."

The reason for the commandment of the red heifer is considered the deepest secret in the Torah. So much so that even King Solomon, the wisest scholar who ever lived, was unable to fathom its deep meaning. According to the Midrash, its meaning will be revealed in the era of the *Mashiach*.

Sources:

- Bamidbar (Numbers) 19
- Mishna Parah 3:5
- Rambam, ibid. 3:4
- Bamidbar Rabba 19:4

Yiddle Riddle

How can you have a mixture which is dairy, and when meat accidentally falls in, the mixture becomes parve (neither meat nor dairy)?

Answer next week...

If you have E-Mail and a question, you can submit it to Ask The Rabbi for possible inclusion in a future edition. Just write your question using your E-Mail program, set the subject to "Ask The Rabbi" and send it to ohr@virtual.co.il. Or use our form at <http://www.ohr.org.il/ask/page/ask.htm>. We can't include all questions submitted, but we do try to respond to everyone.

Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Reuven Laufer, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Becher and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

Ask The Rabbi • World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>

is available from • Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.

several sources: • E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub ask (your full name)" to listproc@virtual.co.il

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

ohr@virtual.co.il

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

Somayach@MSN.com

©1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved

Dedication opportunities are available for Ask The Rabbi — Please contact us for details

Issue #156 - 5 July 1997 - Korach

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.