

Seudat Shlishit - June 28, 2025

The Torah of Torah

Source Sheet by Rabbi Ephraim Pelcovits

Numbers 19:2

This is the ritual law that the LORD has commanded: Instruct the Israelite people to bring you a red cow without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which no yoke has been laid.

במדבר י"ט:ב'

זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' לֵאמֹר דִּבֶּר | אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלָיו פָּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין־בָּהּ מוּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָלָה עָלֶיהָ עֹל:

Rashi on Numbers 19:2:1

THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE LAW — Because Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel, saying, “What is this command and what reason is there for it”, on this account it (Scripture) writes (uses) the term חֻקָּה about it, implying: It is an enactment from before Me; you have no right to criticize it (Yoma 67b; cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 7).

רש"י על במדבר י"ט:ב' א'

זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה. לְפִי שֶׁהִשְׁטָן וְאַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם מוֹנִין אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֵאמֹר מָה הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת וּמָה טַעַם יֵשׁ בָּהּ? לְפִיכֵךְ כָּתַב בָּהּ חֻקָּה — גִּזְרָה הִיא מִלִּפְנֵי, אֵין לָהּ רִשּׁוֹת לְהַרְהֵר אַחֲרֶיהָ (יומא ס"ז):

Bamidbar Rabbah 19:8

(8) ... After he left, his students said to him: ‘You rebuffed this one with a reed. What do you say to us?’ He

במדבר רבה י"ט:ח'

(ח) ... לְאַחַר שֶׁיִּצְאָא אָמְרוּ לוֹ תְּלַמִּידָיו, רַבֵּנוּ, לָזָה דְּחִית

said to them: 'As you live, it is not the corpse that impurifies, and it is not the water that purifies. Rather, the Holy One blessed be He said: I instituted a statute, issued a decree; you are not permitted to violate My decree, as it is written: "This is the statute of the Torah..."

בְּקִנְיָהּ, לָנוּ מָה אֶתָּה אוֹמֵר, אָמַר
לָהֶם חַיִּיכֶם, לֹא הֵמָּה מְטַמְּא
וְלֹא הַמַּיִם מְטַהֲרִין, אֲלֵא אָמַר
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חֻקָּה חֻקֵּי
גִּזְרָה גִּזְרֹתַי אֵי אֶתָּה רִשְׁאֵי לַעֲבֹר
עַל גִּזְרֹתַי, דְּכַתִּיב: זֹאת חֻקַּת
הַתּוֹרָה...

→ What does Torah mean? What does Chok mean? What does it mean to be committed to Torah?

Numbers 19:14

This is the ritual: When a person dies in a tent, whoever enters the tent and whoever is in the tent shall be unclean seven days;

במדבר י"ט:י"ד

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אָדָם כִּי יָמוּת בְּאֹהֶל
כָּל־הַבָּא אֶל־הָאֹהֶל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר
בְּאֹהֶל יִטְמָא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

→ Alternate Translations:

Shocken/Everett Fox: "This is the Instruction..."

Metsuda: "This is the law [regarding] ..."

Berakhot 63b:14

This is **in accordance with** the opinion of **Reish Lakish**, as **Reish Lakish said**: **From where** is it derived **that matters of Torah are only retained by one who kills himself over it?** As it is stated: **"This is the Torah: When one dies in a tent"** (Numbers 19:14); true Torah study demands the total devotion of one who is willing to dedicate his life in the tent of Torah.

ברכות ס"ג ב:י"ד

כְּדָאָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ, דְּאָמַר רִישׁ
לְקִישׁ: מִנֵּין שְׂאִין דְּבְרֵי תּוֹרָה
מִתְקַיְּמִין אֲלֵא בְּמִי שְׂמִמִּית
עֲצָמוֹ עָלֶיהָ — שְׁנַאֲמַר: "זֹאת
הַתּוֹרָה אָדָם כִּי יָמוּת בְּאֹהֶל".

VS.

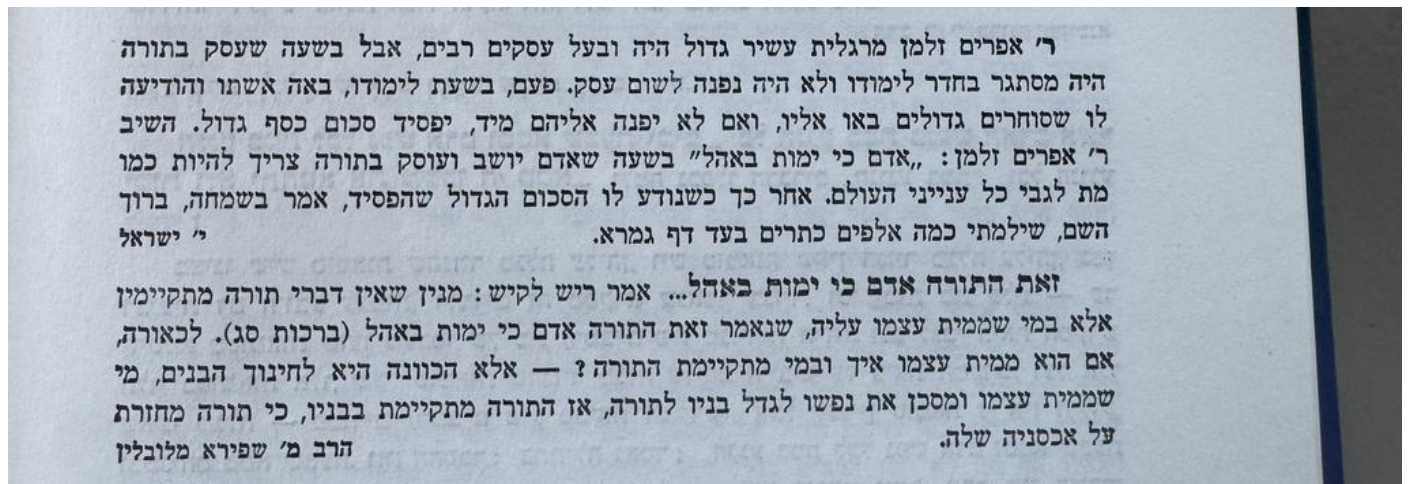
Leviticus 18:5

You shall keep My laws and My rules, by the pursuit of which man shall live: I am the LORD.

ויקרא י"ח:ה'

ושמרתם את־חקתי
ואת־משפטי אשר יעשה אתם
האדם וחי בהם אני ה': {ס}

→ What do you think of these two ideas in contrast? Which is correct? What speaks to you more?



1. Ephraim Zalman Margolioth = Polish/Galicia late 18th-early 20th Century
2. Meir Shapiro of Lublin = late 19th/early 20th Century Poland. Served in Parliament, Started Daf Yomi cycle, opened Yeshivat Chochmei Lublin.