



## Unclean because of obedience!

### Parashat m'tzora (28) – Leper

**Torah:** Wayyiqra 14:1 to 15:33

**Haftarah:** Melakim Bēt 7:3-20

**Apostolic Scriptures:** Marqos 5:22-34

Although we have just covered the subject of impurity after birth, we also paid quite a bit of attention to *tzara'at*, leprosy. This is the subject for this *sidrah* and although it is the best translation we can find, it does not really address the full understanding of the disease. We mentioned that *tzara'at* actually has a spiritual origin that can contaminate not only the human body, but also clothes and houses, something that is completely different from Hansen's disease which is still known as leprosy today. The fact that the leper was brought to a priest, rather than a doctor, is confirmation of the spiritual origin. We see the following quote<sup>1</sup>:

"I will put the plague of *tzaraat* in a house" (cf. 14:34). So it is when leprous plagues come upon man: First they come upon his house. If he repents, it requires only the removal [of affected stones]; if not, it requires tearing down the entire house. Then the plagues come upon one's clothes. If he repents, they require washing; if not, they require burning. Then the plagues came upon his body. If he repents, he undergoes purification; if not, "He shall dwell alone."

The exceptional rules surrounding a person with leprosy would confirm that the contamination of his body was caused by a change, usually a deviation, in his spiritual life. While this person was placed in isolation outside the camp, he or she would be given the opportunity to reflect on any shortcomings or deviations in behaviour that might have led to this condition. When this person then repents and pleads for forgiveness, the same *YAH* who caused the condition, would remove it, so that the person could be declared clean and become part of society once again.

The priest acts as a judge and banisher of a leper, something that is almost contrary to the office in which he was appointed. As an envoy of *YAH*, he is told to bless the people with love. A follower of *Aharon* would be someone who loves and pursues peace, loves *YAH*'s creatures and leads them to *Torah*. However, this is the same reason why he had to condemn the leper. There is nothing that *YAH* hates more than division among His people, something also discussed previously:

*Mishlě* 6 <sup>16</sup>These six *matters* יהוה hates, And seven are an abomination to Him: <sup>17</sup>A proud look, A lying tongue, And hands shedding innocent blood, <sup>18</sup>A heart devising wicked schemes, Feet quick to run to evil, <sup>19</sup>A false witness breathing out lies, And one who causes strife among brothers.  
[emphasis added]

<sup>1</sup> Midrash Rabbah from Chabad.org

Although *Torah* is reluctant to banish people randomly, it is important that no technical experts make a decision regarding removal from the community, but that only a priest appointed by *YAH* performs this task, however difficult the task and however reluctant he may be. If someone from the nation had to perform the task, it could be done out of envy or jealousy, something that in itself may cause that person to later also have to live in isolation with leprosy.

There is a clear relationship between the *מִצְרָע* (*m'tzo-Ra*), leper and our Messiah, for the greatest prophet teaches us:

*Yeshayahu 53* <sup>4</sup>Truly, He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains. Yet we reckoned Him smitten, stricken by *Elohim*, and afflicted.

This teaches us that there is a close connection between the cleansing of the *m'tzora* and our Messiah. The offering that had to be made after being cleansed of *m'tzora*, involves 6 elements:

- ☞ Two live clean birds;
- ☞ Cedar wood;
- ☞ Scarlet;
- ☞ Hyssop;
- ☞ Earthen pot;
- ☞ Living water.

With these elements in mind, we can highlight a few points here from ch. 14:

- ☞ v. 2, 10: his cleansing was completed on the eighth day. Before his death, *Yeshua* was infected with the "leprosy of the sin of the world" in his soul and body. With his resurrection on the eighth day, he was cleansed in the heavenly realm;
- ☞ v. 3: outside the camp: *Yeshua* died outside the city (camp) and his cleansing took place in his heavenly dwelling;
- ☞ vv. 4-7: two live birds, one of which is killed and the other released: *Yeshua* dies and then ascends publicly to heaven;
- ☞ vv. 4, 6: cedar wood: *Yeshua* dies on a torture stake, the crossbars of which were apparently cedar wood;
- ☞ v. 4, 6: scarlet: *Yeshua* was dressed in scarlet before he was tied to the torture stake (cf. *Mattithyahu* 27:28);
- ☞ v. 4, 6: hyssop: a hyssop branch was brought to *Yeshua*'s mouth shortly before his death (cf. *Yohanan* 19:29);
- ☞ v. 5: earthenware pot: *Yeshua*'s body was like an earthenware pot, something that is perishable;
- ☞ v. 5: living water: *Yeshua* passed through the waters of death (cf. *Shemu'el Bět* 22:17; *Yonah* 2:5);
- ☞ v. 6: the living bird was baptised in blood: *Yeshua* still had scars after his resurrection;
- ☞ v. 8: he shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and bathe in water: *Yeshua* had to go through the *טְבִילָה* (*t'vi-Lah*), immersion of death (cf. *Luqas* 12:50), to remove sin – symbolised by unclean clothing, defiled hair, and ceremonial impurity;
- ☞ v. 9: on the seventh day, while *Yeshua* was in the tomb, sin was blotted out;
- ☞ vv. 10-11: on the eighth day he was declared clean and appeared before *YAH* (cf. *Yohanan* 20:17);
- ☞ v. 12: trespass offering, where *Yeshua* was given to *YAH* as a sacrifice for the transgressions of the world.

Man is not someone who wants to live a set-apart life of his own free will – the result of *Hawwah* eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and involving her husband in it. When convicted by *Ruach* of sin, the sinner must be taught to be set apart, how to walk on the Way of Truth and how to apply it in his or her daily life. Unfortunately, most people missed these teachings, because the early church fathers removed *Mosheh* and everything Hebrew. According to them, it was not part of the *b'sorah*, good news, of *Yeshua*. As the friend of the Bridegroom at *Sinai*, *Mosheh* conveyed the rules of *YAH* to the people through

the tables of stone and the tabernacle and in doing so he helped prepare the Bride to await her Bridegroom in pure garments. By conveying *Yeshua's* commands, as the Word of *YAH*, to the nation, they were able to apply the ritual application in their lives: return (*t'shuva*), cleanse (*mikvah*) and anoint (*mashach*) in order to live a set-aparat lifestyle.

In this *aliyah* we see a strong similarity between the priestly ministry and the cleansing of the *m'tzora*. In a previous study a few weeks ago, we saw how the priests were blessed to hear, do, and walk in the set-apart ways that *YAH* had established. They first received blood on their right ear, right thumb, and right big toe, after which oil was also applied to each (*cf. Shemoth 29:20-21*). The similarity we see in vv. 14:14-18 teaches us that *Yeshua*, after his resurrection, was cleansed and appointed to his heavenly ministry (*cf. Ib'rim 8:1-6*). A wonderful mystery is also brought to us in *Zekaryah 3* and we would like to encourage every *Torah* believer to study this entire chapter with the necessary attention under the guidance of *Ruach*.

No two people on earth are the same, whether it be in status, health, finances, talents or intelligence. Fortunately, we learn in Scripture that *YAH* makes no distinction between rich and poor people. He treats everyone the same, but takes into account that a poor person would not have the ability to bring what a rich person would bring. We see a small difference in the trespass offering of a poor person who brings only one lamb, instead of two. We learn from this that no sin can be removed without blood, without a life being taken – hence the perfect sacrifice that *Yeshua* made on the torture stake on behalf of us all. In both cases, the rich and the poor person, the dead bird represents sin that has been blotted out and the living bird represents the renewed person after cleansing.

It is frequently repeated in Scripture that we must be set apart. This includes not only us as individuals, but also our dwellings. If your dwelling does not meet *YAH's* standards, He may see fit to affect your home, just as He does your body. It is therefore not surprising that in the fourth *aliyah* we see the following:

*Wayyiqra 14* <sup>33</sup>And יהוה spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon, saying, <sup>34</sup>“When you come into the land of Kena'an, which I am giving you as a possession, and I put a plague of leprosy in a house in the land of your possession,

We should note that this rule was already given in the wilderness, but that it would only become applicable when the people in the promised land would build their own houses of stone and plaster. This rule did not apply to tents. Nor is it something that would happen because a leper lived in the house. Here *YAH* says that He will place the plague of leprosy in the house. The same reasons can be given as when a person became infected, but here there could also be more than one person who committed *lashon hara*<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, it could be an early warning to someone who was gradually going off the path. If heeded, the house could be saved, otherwise it might have to be completely destroyed. Any further transgressions would later cause the person himself to become infected with leprosy.

In the case of a house being infected, it had to be evacuated immediately. This served a dual purpose:

- ☞ people in the house could be infected;
- ☞ If the house was locked up and not inhabited, the infection would spread and be identified more quickly.

Regardless of the circumstances, the same items were brought as for the person who would be infected, but no sacrifice, and therefore no lamb. Buildings simply had to be clean and set apart, therefore no sacrifice was necessary.

There are so many lies, mostly from the churches, that *hasatan* is responsible for all our problems. He would supposedly bring diseases upon you, cause accidents and many other negative things to happen to you. This is one of the first things we would like to address in a follow-up series of “The Bus to Heaven”, in the will of *YAH*. Scripture teaches us that *YAH* brings the plague of leprosy into a house. He may possibly do

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<sup>2</sup> *Lashon hara* is the Hebrew for hate speech, slander, gossip and similar matters. It literally translates as “evil tongue” or “evil language”.

this by sending a messenger, although this messenger may even be *hasatan*. At all times YAH is and remains in control of everything on earth, even if it sometimes feels as if things are being swallowed up in chaos.

Whether we want to admit it or not, YAH even controls evil. When evil strikes in your life, it is because YAH has allowed it, not because He wants to pronounce evil upon you or delights in it, but because He allows it. Every being in the air and on earth is in the service of YAH. He is much more intelligent and aware of everything because He created it, therefore nothing can catch Him off guard. The sins of man, even messengers, are no surprise to YAH and therefore no problem. He created everything for His esteem and for His purpose (cf. *Yeshayahu* 43:7; *Mishlě* 16:4; *Mizmor* 100:1-5 et al), even a world that rebels against Him.

Many tragedies have occurred, including where created beings have been deceived and failed, so much so that they are lost forever. However, this does not mean that YAH is not esteemed by all things. When He decides to strike a house with *tzara'at*, it is because He has a purpose for it. Sickness may serve YAH's purpose, as may other evil and negative things that may happen. We cannot and should not blame *hasatan* for things that go wrong, but rather must reach into our own bosom and find out what we have done wrong, in order to fix it, to remove the *tzara'at* from our lives and our homes. YAH will never allow *hasatan* to just randomly do whatever he wants, but allows matters to stay within the limits of the Almighty. Read and study the book of *Job* to see how YAH works.

If you have a problem with *hasatan*, talk to YAH instead, because He may have given permission for certain things to happen, especially when you find them unpleasant. When you experience problems, seek the solution from YAH. He loves you infinitely and wants to help you in everything, to the point that He will send plagues and problems your way to bring you back, where you will repent and acknowledge Him in everything. Do not allow your focus to be directed elsewhere.

Up to this point we have dealt with various forms of impurity and to conclude this topic we will finally look at discharges from both men and women. This is a difficult subject, especially with a mixed audience and in these times when many people do not know who or what they are, but it is an important study to work through and therefore we will attempt to go through these rules with the least embarrassment to anyone and see how Scripture directs us to please the Father in all things.

Any person who is unclean in any way is unacceptable to YAH and therefore we are given rules to get rid of this uncleanness. We sometimes do not understand how ritual uncleanness occurs and it may be difficult to understand what we will discuss later, but the common denominator, the element that all forms of uncleanness have in common, is death. After Creation, *Adam* and *Hawwah* lived a perfect life where they lived with YAH in a garden of delight. There was no burden placed on either of them, with only one negative rule that YAH gave them:

*Berēshith* 2<sup>17</sup> but do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it you shall certainly die."

Our Creator is a living *Elohim* and that is why ritual impurity is produced by death, something that is not alive. Unclean animals do not cause ritual impurity while they are alive, but even the carcasses of clean animals cause ritual impurity. The plague of *tzara'at* will bring death if not treated in time, therefore a corpse is the greatest source of ritual impurity. This is one of the reasons why a priest on duty may not touch a corpse, because the period of purification will extend beyond his period of service. We recently saw the case with the death of *Avihu* and *Nadav*.

Humans were created to reproduce (cf. *Berēshith* 1:28; 9:1), therefore the reproductive organs are constantly creating new cells from which life can later be produced. However, these cells have a limited lifespan and when they die, the body excretes them. In the case of a woman, there is a set cycle of 28 days when dead egg cells are excreted from the body. This is known as menstruation and normally lasts for

about 3 to 5 days. During this period, a woman is unclean, for the simple reason that she is in direct contact with death – dead egg cells, even possibly dead male sperm. This is similar to when someone touches the carcass of a dead animal.

For seven days after menstruation has stopped, the woman remains impure. During this period, estrogen levels rise, which prepares the lining of the uterus to nourish an embryo, should pregnancy occur shortly afterwards. At the same time, an egg forms in one of the ovaries and begins to prepare to move out. By about day 14, roughly halfway through the cycle, the egg moves through the fallopian tube to the uterus. This process is known as ovulation. The lining of the uterus is now assisted by rising hormone levels to be ready in case pregnancy occurs. If a male sperm fertilises the egg during the period of ovulation and the egg attaches to the lining of the uterus, pregnancy occurs. An unfertilised egg breaks apart and after hormone levels have dropped, the bloody lining of the uterus is shed during the next menstruation.

Most men will not admit it, but there is also a 28-day cycle in place for them. However, it has nothing to do with reproduction, but with emotions and stress. While a woman is therefore only able to get pregnant for about 5 days a month, *YAH* has created men differently. After a restful night's sleep, a man wakes up with very high levels of testosterone, which gives him the willpower and ability to reproduce. This cycle is therefore something that repeats itself every 24 hours! After puberty, the male reproductive system begins to produce sperm daily. It is developed in the testes, a process that takes about 50 to 60 days. From here it moves on to the epididymis where it takes another 14 days to reach full maturity. Ripe sperm are stored in the scrotum until they are excreted during the process of sexual intercourse. If regular intercourse does not occur, the body finds other ways to excrete it – something that we will not expand on in this study. When it is not excreted in any way, it eventually decomposes and is absorbed into the body.

The excretions we learn about here in Scripture are therefore in all cases unused or dead cells, from the man or the woman and in both cases it makes the person unclean, regardless of how it gets out of the body. Also keep in mind that the body is a temple; while the woman is unclean, she may not come to the man (a temple) and vice versa. It takes 7 days for the woman's reproductive system to recover after her menstruation, to reach the point where she will be fertile to become pregnant; this is the only reason why she is declared unclean for the extra 7 days – for the recovery of her body. The command of *YAH* was to procreate. If the woman is not completely healthy, this will not be possible. During this period the man respects the woman's healing process, but he also respects the Creator. This reverence is not part of religious legalism and has nothing to do with the salvation of the soul, but is purely a command of *YAH* that must be obeyed at all times, like every other command in Scripture. It is simply there for our health and to be able to derive a blessing from it.

As it the case with clean and unclean meat, which we studied earlier, the time of *nidah* also has to do with clean and unclean. Blood is life (*cf. Wayyiqra* 17:11-14; *Debarim* 12:23 *et al*) and therefore the uterus is lined with blood on the inside when the egg is ready to be fertilised. If this does not happen, the egg and the lining of the uterus are excreted in a cleansing process to keep the woman's reproductive system healthy. If the rule of mutual abstinence is disregarded, it may lead to contamination of both the man's and the woman's genitals, something that may later even degenerate into cancer of the ovaries, breasts or prostate. Keep in mind that diseases are mostly caused by rules that are known but not observed.

We distinguish three types of impurity: moral, ritual, and physical. Ritual impurity is where the relationship with the tabernacle is affected. Although there is a relationship between the three, it is necessary that we consider them separately to remove any doubt. Moral impurity is what *Yeshua* spoke about to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they accused the *talmidim* of eating with unclean hands (*cf. Marqos* 7:15-23). This may itself include some physical impurity, but none of these types of impurity can defile the tabernacle.

We do defile the tabernacle, our own bodies as well as the body of *Yeshua*, when we break the rules regarding the human body – the ritual impurity that we learn about in Scripture. Moral and physical

impurity has nothing to do with death, but ritual impurity has everything to do with it. It may be that someone has touched the carcass of a dead animal, handled the corpse of a close relative, or gone through a bodily process of excretion that makes the person unclean.

There is currently no rule for purification or offering sacrifices after any ritual or physical impurity, but the most important thing is to adhere to what Scripture teaches us. This also ensures a hygienic body. A healthy marriage life ensures that both partners remain in good health and only experience any ritual impurity at certain times. Married couples who respect each other and live according to the rules of Scripture will find that they are not only moving closer to each other, but also closer to YAH.

From the Apostolic Scriptures we learn of two instances, in succession, where *Yeshua* could literally be ritually unclean. While he is busy teaching, a certain ruler calls him to bring his dead daughter back to life. On his way there, amongst a large crowd, a sick woman sees her chance. She has spent all her money on doctors and after twelve years still has not stopped bleeding. This was obviously a problem unique to women and therefore she was also considered unclean. However, her trust was placed in *Yeshua* and we learn:

*Mattithyahu 9* <sup>21</sup>For she said to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I shall be healed."

In the other *b'sorot*, books of good news, we get a little more information, but enough to mention here is that the woman touched *Yeshua's tzitziyot*, the tassels on his clothes (cf. *Bemidbar* 15:37-41). At that moment *Yeshua* realised that power was going out of him and then we learn:

*Mattithyahu 9* <sup>22</sup>But יהושע turned, and when He saw her He said, "Take courage, daughter, your belief has healed you." And the woman was healed from that hour.

The word 'saved' is the same word we were introduced to earlier, σωζω (*sô-zô*), which literally means to be freed from sin. This woman is not only healthy, but now also part of *Yeshua's* following! It is that same trust that the ruler showed and where *Yeshua* is now heading. When he arrives at the place, we learn another important lesson:

*Mattithyahu 9* <sup>24</sup>He said to them, "Go back, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they laughed at Him.

Here is an aspect that some people still do not understand and also one of the reasons why we broadcast the radio series "The Bus to Heaven" some time ago. Physical death of the body is in fact a form of sleep from which we will be resurrected at *Yeshua's* return (cf. *Tas'loniqim Aleph* 4:16-17; *Ma'asei* 7:60; *Yeshayahu* 26:19 *et al*). Although the spirit of man immediately returns to *Elohim* (cf. *Qoheleth* 12:7; *Luqas* 23:46 *et al*), the soul remains in a resting state of sleep while the human body returns to dust (cf. *Mizmor* 146:4; *Hazon* 14:13; *Mizmor* 104:29; *et al*). No one, not even *Mosheh*, *Dawid* or anyone else, has ever gone to heaven:

*Melaḳim Aleph* 2 <sup>10</sup>And Dawid slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of Dawid.

There are plenty of other verses to support this, but we have briefly taken a detour so that this lie of the (Catholic) church can be given the boot. By healing the sick, especially lepers, and raising people from the dead, *Yeshua* does not become unclean. This was part of his task on earth and would be the ultimate purpose why he would die on the torture stake, on behalf of our sins. If he had become unclean in any way, he could not intercede for our sins! Not only did he teach us how to live fully according to *Torah*, but also how we can stay clean: keep your tongue in check and follow every moral rule that YAH has given us in *Torah*.

Something else we need to take note of, is that even obedience can make us unclean – the title of this study. Yes, you heard that right. YAH gives us a *mitzvah*, commandment, to be fruitful and multiply (cf. *Bereshith* 1:28), something that would not have been a problem before the Fall of man. Now, after the Fall, and as a result of disobedience, we become unclean when we are obedient! It sounds absurd, like an anomaly, but keep in mind that this is not a permanent uncleanness. There are many people who are



unclean almost every day as a result of contact with the dead, sexual intercourse, menstruation and diseases such as diarrhoea and similar cases. We live in a broken, fallen world and while this should not be an excuse, it is still our attitude towards YAH and our attitude towards our fellow man by which we are judged.

There are people who will deliberately keep themselves unclean, while others want to live as clean as possible in every way. It is one thing to become unclean when obeying a command from YAH, or as a result of your profession; there is a cleansing process and cleansing period in place for that. However, if people make themselves unclean of their own free will, without the will of YAH, there is no cleansing process that will cleanse them and it is considered willful sin – something for which there is no forgiveness:

*ib`rim 10* <sup>26</sup>For if we sin purposely after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a slaughter *offering* for sins, <sup>27</sup>but some fearsome anticipation of judgement, and a fierce fire which is about to consume the opponents. <sup>28</sup>Anyone who has disregarded the *Torah* of Mosheh dies without compassion on the witness of two or three witnesses. [emphasis original]

The law of Mosheh is what Yeshua came to earth to live out, to teach us (cf. *Ma`asei* 3:22-26; 7:37):

*Debarim 18* <sup>15</sup>“יהוה your Elohim shall raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brothers. Listen to Him,

We should not complicate matters for ourselves, because YAH’s rules are truly simple and given to guide us to a life of abundance. If we live as Yeshua came to teach us, there is nothing to worry about. *Sha’ul* summarises it neatly when he addresses his fellow believers in Rome:

*Romiyim 8* <sup>1</sup>There is, then, now no condemnation to those who are in Messiah יהושע, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. <sup>2</sup>For the *torah* of the Spirit of the life in Messiah יהושע has set me free from the *torah* of sin and of death. [emphasis added]

Unfortunately, most christians either don’t read to the end of the verse, or simply ignore the last part, therefore they think we are freed from the law – done and dusted. If we didn’t have a ‘law’, we wouldn’t know what sin is. The *talmid* of love also explains it very well:

*Yohanan Aleph 3* <sup>4</sup>Everyone doing sin also does lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

My dear brother and sister, with all this information, as confusing as it may sound at times, there is only one way to please YAH: be obedient to His Word, His rules, all of them. Do not rely on other people, but study your Scripture daily, working through it intimately while you are under the guidance of *Ruach HaQodesh* and YAH will give you the answers you long for. Never stop having a full and intimate relationship with YAH. Let us be grateful that the fall did not cause permanent damage that would cause us to be lost forever, but that there is a way out for us and that Yeshua was willing to face the punches, the whippings, the mockery and eventual death on our behalf. This is also what the recent festival of *Pesach* was about.

*Shabbat shalom!*

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#### Sources:

Unless otherwise stated, all text is quoted from The Scriptures (2009)<sup>3</sup>. Due to personal conviction, the word ‘God’ is replaced with the Hebrew ‘Elohim’ or sometimes inflections thereof.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://isr-messianic.org/>

You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series – Dr. Bob Utley  
Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible  
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