



Impurity of the heart causes impurity of the lips

Parashat tazria (27) – She gets pregnant

Torah: Wayyiqra 12:1 to 15:33

Haftarah: Melakim Bět 4:42 to 5:19

Apostolic Scriptures: Mattithyahu 8:1-17

It is incredibly wonderful how YAH's Word confirms and proves itself as something not invented by men, although it was written down by men, but with the inspiration of *Ruach*. About two or three weeks ago, while talking about gratitude, we quoted verses from *Luqas*. This is therefore an important lesson for every person who professes to walk the Way of Truth, but who gets the idea that he or she is already perfected in *Torah* after a year or two. People like these are not only unclean, but immature in their walk with YAH. They thereby defile the body of *Yeshua* and bring division, something that is clearly forbidden:

Romiyim 16 ¹⁷Now I call upon you, brothers, watch out for those who cause divisions and stumbling, contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. ¹⁸For such ones do not serve our Master יהושע Messiah, but their own stomach, and by smooth words and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent.

Any person who sows discord, who brings division in the body of *Yeshua*, has the same disease as the person we will be studying today: צִרְעָת (tza-Ra'at), leprosy. Scripture teaches us in various places about impurity and with deeper study we see that there are different types of impurity. Women are unclean after giving birth, as we will see shortly. Both men and women are unclean because they have touched a carcass or a dead person, had an emission, or suffered from the disease of leprosy. However, there is also impurity that people bring upon themselves through idolatry or by eating the wrong animals, something we discussed last week. Few people realise that *lashon hara*, slander or gossip, as well as the adherence to and spreading of untruths, makes a person unclean:

Timotiyos Aleph 3 ⁸Likewise attendants are to be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for filthy gain,

Words spoken are like a child being born. Although words develop quickly in the mind and come to the mouth to be spoken almost instantly, they follow a similar pattern to how an embryo develops in the womb. The latter does take longer, because it is controlled by YAH, while many words we utter are not always in line with what *Ruach* puts in our minds. Most of us are so prone to just speak and think later. This also includes all the garbage we encounter on various social media channels and simply accept as truth, because we want to be the first to share it with others – regardless of whether there is truth in it or not.

In the first five chapters of *Wayyiqra* we learned about the five types of offerings, a way in which *YAH* teaches His firstborn, the people of *Yisra'el*, how to develop a pure mind, will and emotion, a pure heart, before they approach Him. They are taught that they are created in the image of *YAH* and therefore set-apart beings. It is essential to responsibly create a set-apart dwelling place for *YAH* in which *Ruach* can dwell, also something we discussed last week. Regardless of these rules being explicitly taught, there are still people who wilfully ignore them, some perhaps in ignorance. For this reason, it is essential that *Torah* believers be taught how to walk the way of salvation and live a set-apart lifestyle. This can only be achieved through gradual and ongoing revelation, something that *YAH* has developed to keep the mind free from defilement. Just as we learned about physical defilement last week, we will learn more about spiritual defilement today.

We have discussed in previous studies that we sometimes see certain events or rules in Scripture that are beyond the understanding of most people. This *sidrah* is no exception, for many rules are given, but few explanations follow. Due to modern methods and the development of technology, some things have become more understandable, but there still remain more questions than answers. We will try to suggest some of these answers, although not all of them will necessarily be correct or acceptable. It will therefore require the investigation of every *Torah*-believer to ascertain what is true, what is speculation, and what we will never know.

This *sidrah* is one of those that we would like to skip, especially since it contains certain elements that are difficult to explain, but despite this, there are still great truths hidden that we will try to highlight and explain. As it happens in shorter years, the study of this *sidrah* is combined with the following *sidrah*, *m'tzora*, leprosy. However, in the longer years, when a thirteenth month is added, there are four weeks during which these double studies are handled separately. We would therefore overlap the topics of this and the following *sidrah*.

Almost strange, but something that may be better understood later, is the impurity of a woman who gives birth. This is almost a contradiction, because we learn:

Berëshith 1 ²⁸ And *Elohim* blessed them, and *Elohim* said to them, "Be fruitful and increase, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over all creeping creatures on the earth."

However, that was before the Fall. After *Adam* and *Hawwah* sinned, we learn:

Berëshith 3 ¹⁶ To the woman He said, "I greatly increase your sorrow and your conception – bring forth children in pain. And your desire is for your husband, and he does rule over you."

Pain is not always something that manifests itself physically, but can sometimes also occur spiritually. Think of something like sadness. While your heart is not necessarily physically hurting, there is a form of longing, even anxiety. This state is cultivated as a result of a desire to be close to someone who may have passed away or for whatever reason is not with you – perhaps even in another country. It may also be that you want to do something, but you do not have the empowerment or you are not able to do it – either physically or without the necessary help, equipment or permission. Things like these cause pain and this is part of what *YAH* intended when He laid this burden on *Hawwah* and her descendants.

The shortest chapter of the book of *Wayyiqra*, almost halfway through the book, deals mainly with the consequences of *Hawwah's* disobedience. We have mentioned several times in the past that punishment is the result of disobedience. The referee's whistle does not blow when the game continues normally, but only when a violation is committed. After the fall of man, *YAH* blows the whistle for *Hawwah*. He will no longer rule over her, but *Adam* will now rule over her. Where pregnancy would have been a pleasure, it will now happen with difficulty and childbirth will be accompanied by pain. Compare the advice that *Sha'ul*

gives to *Timotiyos* in *Timotiyos Aleph* 2:9-15 and let us also understand from scratch why women are not allowed to teach.

The birth of a child is very exciting. A new soul comes into the world, but it could have been a perfect soul in a perfect world. Since the woman allowed sin to come into the world, it is also through her that another sinful soul is now brought into a sinful world. For this reason, a period of seclusion is commanded; 40 days for a son and 80 days for a daughter. The woman was only acting in obedience to the command of *Berēshith* 1:28, but because of the sin of the first mother, everyone is now born in sin:

🪷 *Mizmor* 51 ⁵See, I was brought forth in crookedness, And in sin my mother conceived me.

🪷 *Romiyim* 5 ¹⁹For as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One many shall be made righteous.

As usual, typical of the Character of *YAH*, there is not only punishment meted out, but we once again see His favour lavishly poured out as well. During the mother's נִדָּה (*ni-Dah*), impurity after birth and comparable to menstrual impurity, there is a period of 40 days in which the mother can bond with the new son. In the case of a daughter, the period is doubled, simply because she is an instrument of procreation who in turn will bring sinners into the world and sin cannot be overlooked. A mother is therefore given a longer period to devote attention to the new daughter. During the bonding period for both sons and daughters, any intimate relationship with the man is off limits in order to ensure a complete healing process for the woman. At the end of the *nidah* period, both an *olah* (atonement offering) and *chatat* (sin offering) are offered to change the mother's status from unclean to clean. At the time of *Yeshua's* ministry, these rules and rituals were still in place:

Luqas 2 ²²And when the days of her cleansing according to the *Torah* of *Mosheh* were completed, they brought Him to *Yerushalayim* to present Him to יהוה – ²³as it has been written in the *Torah* of יהוה, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called set-apart to יהוה" ²⁴and to give an offering according to what is said in the *Torah* of יהוה, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." [emphasis original]

Priests in the time of the children of *Yisra'el* in the wilderness had a great task upon them. Although they were ordained as spiritual leaders, they also had to act as physicians. This physician, however, would not necessarily provide medication, but would act more in the capacity of a judge who had to make a decision whether a person was clean or unclean. In the meantime, he runs the risk of becoming infected himself if the disease was malignant and contagious.

In standard terms, a man is referred to as אִישׁ (*ish*) and a woman as אִשָּׁה (*i-Shah*), yet, towards the end of this first *aliyah* we see (cf. *Berēshith* 1:20):

Wayyiqra 13 ²"When a man (אָדָם - *Adam*) has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it shall become on the skin of his body like a leprous infection, then he shall be brought to Aharon the priest or to one of his sons the priests.

The whole thought surrounding this situation is compared to that of the woman we just learned about. Although she sinned, her husband, who was with her, did not try to prevent it and is also guilty of the same transgression:

Berēshith 3 ⁶And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, and she took of its fruit and ate. And she also gave to **her husband with her**, and he ate. [emphasis added]

The guilt of sin would therefore not rest on one generation alone, but on humanity as a whole. *Adam* was created first and *Hawwah* would be a help for and against him (cf. *Berēshith* 2:18). However, he was to

subdue the earth with her and rule over it, but when he had to correct her, he remained silent and stood behind the door with his wife. Therefore, there can be no extenuating circumstances for either of the two.

Most scholars agree that *tzara'at* is the consequence or punishment for derogatory or humiliating words or remarks made towards other people, even if spoken in truth. Although a person can be unclean in many ways, only someone with *tzara'at* was to live outside the camp, in seclusion:

Wayyiqra 13 ⁴⁶“He is unclean – all the days he has the infection he is unclean. He is unclean, and he dwells alone, his dwelling place is outside the camp.

This form of impurity is not only a physical disease, but it also refers to a physical manifestation of a spiritual disease, a punishment designed to teach the evildoer to forsake his or her wrong ways. It can therefore be seen not as a disease in the true sense of the word, but as a supernatural form of spiritual discipline. Because of the spiritual separation that the evildoer has brought between himself and a fellow believer with his destructive words, he must also be physically removed from society, living in seclusion, as outlined in the above verse. Rabbis of old reasoned that the inner cause of *tzara'at* was caused by sins of a social nature, such as lying, sexual immorality, false promises, pride, and especially slander. *Yeshua* was in full agreement with this:

Mattithyahu 15 ¹⁸“But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and these defile the man. ¹⁹“For out of the heart come forth wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, whorings, thefts, false witnessings, slanders. ²⁰“These defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

Very few people pay attention to what they say, especially about other people. We are very quick to point out the faults of others, without correcting our own, but *YAH* takes the sin of the human tongue very seriously. *Mosheh's* sister, *Miryam*, was struck with leprosy because she slandered him (*cf. Bemidbar* 12:1), something that we will study in the future in the will of *YAH*. Our words have power to build up and tear down, therefore we must use them with deliberation. We are addressed in many places in Scripture about this, such as:

☞ *Wayyiqra* 19 ¹⁶“Do not go slandering among your people. Do not stand against the blood of your neighbour. I am *יהוה*.”

☞ *Ya'aqob* 4 ¹¹“Brothers, do not speak against one another. He that speaks against a brother and judges his brother, speaks against *Torah* and judges *Torah*. And if you judge *Torah*, you are not a doer of *Torah* but a judge.

Even from the mouth of *Yeshua* we learn the following:

Mattithyahu 12 ³⁶“And I say to you that for every idle word men speak, they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷“For by your words you shall be declared righteous, and by your words you shall be declared unrighteous.”

Keep in mind the expression we have used a few times before: *מִדָּה כְּנִגְדִּי מִדָּה* (*mi-dah ke-ne-ged mi-dah*), measure for measure. On earth we live in a mirror image of what is in heaven. The study of the tabernacle we have just completed, is a representation of what is in heaven, something *Mosheh* saw on the mountain (*cf. Shemoth* 25:9; 25:40; *Ib'rim* 8:5 *et al*). We are treated by *YAH* on a measure-for-measure basis; our actions on earth will determine how we are treated in heaven. This is a very deep and almost mysterious concept, but the best thing we can do, both for ourselves and others, is to avoid backbiting and slander as much as possible. We should also never be an audience for anyone who speaks ill of another, because two negative things happen in such a case: first, the person who speaks ill of another derives pleasure from speaking ill of the other one, whether it be true or false, and will continue involving other listeners; and second, the mind of the hearer is poisoned, because what has been heard cannot suddenly be unheard, erased.

The priest who declares a person clean or unclean does not do so of his own will, but with heavenly empowerment. Although we learn all the details in *Torah* according to which the priest must proceed to make a judgement, he is given authority by *YAH* to do so – something we have discussed in past studies. A person must therefore only be declared clean or unclean by the priest, even though the sufferer knows the symptoms and may be able to determine for himself whether he is clean or unclean. *Torah*'s description of clean and unclean does not empower this person to make that decision for himself. We see how this rule is carried through into the Apostolic Writings from the words of *Yeshua*¹:

☞ *Mattithyahu 16* ¹⁹“And I shall give you the keys of the reign of the heavens, and whatever you bind on earth shall be having been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loosen on earth shall be having been loosened in the heavens.”

☞ *Mattithyahu 18* ¹⁸“Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be having been bound in heaven, and whatever you loosen on earth shall be having been loosened in heaven.

These quotes do not authorise believers to act randomly in spiritual matters as they see fit; *YAH* appoints people and empowers them in this way to allow His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (cf. *Mattithyahu 6:10*). In most cases, *Ruach* will empower the person or persons to act as needed. Another correction that must also be made here, something that is especially preached in the charismatic churches, is that we supposedly have the power to bind *hasatan* or undo its actions. This is one of the biggest mistakes people can ever make, because nobody, no person on earth, has that power or empowerment. *Hasatan* will be bound by *YAH*, and then only at the time that *YAH* has determined, at the end of time:

Hazon 20 ² And he seized the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and *Satan*, and bound him for a thousand years, ³and he threw him into the pit of the deep, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should lead the nations no more astray until the thousand years were ended. And after that he has to be released for a little while.

Only after the *Gog* and *Magog* war will we forever be free from *hasatan*, when three things happen:

1. *Hazon 20* ¹⁰ And the devil, who led them astray, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they shall be tortured day and night forever and ever.
2. *Hazon 20* ¹⁴ And Death and *She'ol* were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
3. *Hazon 20* ¹⁵ And if anyone was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

When we bind or loose something on earth, it only means giving or refusing permission – something that has already been confirmed in heaven. This is exactly what the priests of old would do: they would give permission for the person who had leprosy to be announced clean and able to move back into society. Of course, the reverse would also be true, where a priest would send someone outside the camp when the person was unclean. We must also understand that no one was considered unclean the first time. The priest had to send the person away and examine him a second time after seven days. It is almost like two witnesses, but in this we also see two other aspects: the positive and the negative. When I do someone a favour, it may be because I really want to help; it may also be that I may one day expect a favour from that person. *YAH* knows our thoughts and reasons for actions, therefore He will also be focused on what we consider positive or negative. If we want to receive the benefit of the doubt, we must also give the benefit of the doubt.

We learn a very important principle in the following verse:

Wayyiqra 13 ³³ then he shall shave himself, but the eruption he does not shave. And the priest shall shut up *the one with* the eruption another seven days.

1 Binding and loosening is a Hebrew idiom for exercising authority (to prohibit and permit).

When a person experiences impurity, whether through self-examination or a third party, the sign of impurity may not be removed. We may therefore not continue with our lives as if everything is normal. We may try to hide the consequences, but the root of the evil must be addressed and removed. Someone who avoids this process will walk around with a sense of guilt or a psychological remorse for the rest of their lives, something that may later manifest as a physical cancer or other serious illness. As humans, we tend to suppress or control the symptoms of our illnesses through chemical rubbish, things that result in bigger and longer-lasting problems. External signs that are removed without the necessary humility, bring not only further damage to the individual, but also to the body of *Yeshua*. The root of the evil must be addressed and then the symptoms will also disappear.

Sha'ul teaches us in *Romiyim* 7 regarding two sets of rules, two laws, that operate in our lives: the law of life and the law of sin and death. When we are faced with certain decisions, there is a choice to exercise: obey *YAH* and walk on the Way of Truth or disobey *YAH* and wait for the consequences to kick in. When a *Torah* believer begins to study the law of life, *Ruach* awakens a desire in that person to walk on the Way of Truth in set-apartness and full forgiveness.

What Scripture describes as leprosy is indeed not the disease we know today, but is known as Hansen's disease. The *tzara'at* referred to in Scripture was usually of relatively short duration, something that began and spread quickly – hence the seven-day waiting period. Hansen's disease may lie dormant for between 5 and 20 years before any symptoms become visible. Some of the symptoms include granulomas of the nervous system, respiratory system, skin and eyes. This disease can be treated to prevent it from spreading further, but it cannot be reversed, whereas the leprosy referred to in Scripture could be cured (cf. *Melaḳim Bēt* 5:14; *Mattithyahu* 8:2-4; *Luqas* 5:12-13 et al). We see a good example in a passage we recently quoted:

Luqas 17 ¹²And as He was entering into a certain village, He was met by ten leprous men, who stood at a distance. ¹³And they lifted up their voices, saying, “יהושע, Master, have compassion on us!”
¹⁴And having seen them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And it came to be, that as they were going, they were cleansed.

Of the ten men, one returned and thanked *Yeshua*, whereupon we hear the words of *Yeshua*:

Luqas 17 ¹⁹And He said to him, “Rise, go your way. Your belief has made you well.”

Notice that belief, trust, is the factor that brought about *Yeshua*'s power. The man's faith not only healed him physically, but *Yeshua*'s healing power through his faith also gave him eternal life (cf. *Luqas* 7:9,50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; *Marqos* 5:34; 10:52; *Mattithyahu* 9:22,29; 15:28). Here we see the verb σώζω (*sô-zô*), which is used throughout in Greek for salvation. However, here it is also used as in *Torah* where we observe not only physical deliverance, but where the person is also spiritually delivered. *Yeshua*'s half-brother states this very clearly:

Ya'aqob 5 ¹⁵And the prayer of the belief shall save the sick, and the Master shall raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he shall be forgiven.

It is extremely tragic that the other nine did receive physical healing, but will likely experience the second death because of their ingratitude. This one man's gratitude also confirmed his trust in *Yeshua* and redeemed him from the second death. His words are in contrast to that of people who like to talk about others, whether true or not. *Yeshua* also warned another person he healed to keep his tongue in check:

Mattithyahu 8 ⁴And יהושע said to him, “See, mention it to no one. But go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that *Mosheh* commanded, as a witness to them.” [emphasis added]

First, it was about *Yeshua*'s task on earth not yet completed; people would flock to him only to receive healing. However, the man could have omitted many other things, words that would be unnecessary. In all the cases where *tzara'at* is mentioned, it occurs where either the tabernacle or one of the two temples

existed, therefore where YAH dwelt among the people. This teaches us that YAH's Presence is like a sword with two edges. On the one hand, His Presence heals all our diseases, but on the other hand, we must show more trust and act wisely to prevent diseases and plagues in our lives. *Torah* uses many words to highlight this disease, since it manifests not only physically on people, but also on everyday objects, even in homes and hence the reason why each case is described in the greatest detail.

Leprosy, such as we learn about in Scripture, was extremely contagious and had to be treated thoroughly in order to be completely cured, so that others would not be infected by it (*cf. Debarim 24:8*). When we compare it to the spiritual leprosy, *lashon hara*, it is still very contagious today! That is why we must consider it a sin, something we should not take lightly, but consider seriously to banish it from our lives. We must not allow this plague to spread or get out of control in any way. It is essential to cry out to YAH for help, because on our own we cannot find healing.

The treatment for *tzara'at* at that time was to isolate the person and remove them from society. So we see that the gossip, the one who gossips and belittles others, was removed from the camp before the infection could spread. If we had to do that today, no two people would be able to live together! Every person would live in isolation, because everyone has that tendency to spread certain stories. The easiest way to bring healing is to not be an audience for such a person – walk away immediately and listen no further. *Kěpha* is one of those people who mostly opened his mouth to change feet – perhaps the reason why we can learn a lot from him:

Kěpha Aleph 3 ¹⁰For “He who wishes to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit, [emphasis original]

The man after YAH's own heart (*cf. Shemu'el Aleph 13:14*), *Dawid*, teaches us:

Mizmor 15 ¹יהוה, who does sojourn in Your Tent? Who does dwell in Your set-apart mountain? ²He who walks blamelessly, And does righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart. ³He has not slandered with his tongue, He has not done evil to his neighbour, Nor lifted up a reproach against his friend;

Any person with wisdom from YAH will not judge others based on their first experience of someone. We learn this from the priests and the way they would not summarily cut someone off from society and put them in isolation without examining the person at least twice. May YAH work it through *the Ruach* in each of us to give people who may cross our path, at least a second chance before we jump to any conclusions. Even then, our thoughts should be guided by *Torah*, in the way *Shelomoh* teaches us:

Mishlě 17 ²⁸Even a fool keeping silence is regarded as wise, As understanding, when he closes his lips.

Each of us came into life with a secret weapon: the power of speech. On the contrary, ancient Hebrew sources teach us that the right way to use that speech is not to gossip, not to practice backbiting, and not to say anything bad about others, even if it is true. It is a weapon with which we can protect ourselves spiritually and therefore we must use it properly. May each of us make that decision from today on to use the secret weapon, our tongue, for the benefit of others and ourselves, so that it may also be to the glory of YAH.

Shabbat shalom!

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Sources:

Unless otherwise stated, all text is quoted from The Scriptures (2009)². Due to personal conviction, the word 'God' is replaced with the Hebrew '*Elohim*' or sometimes inflections thereof.

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