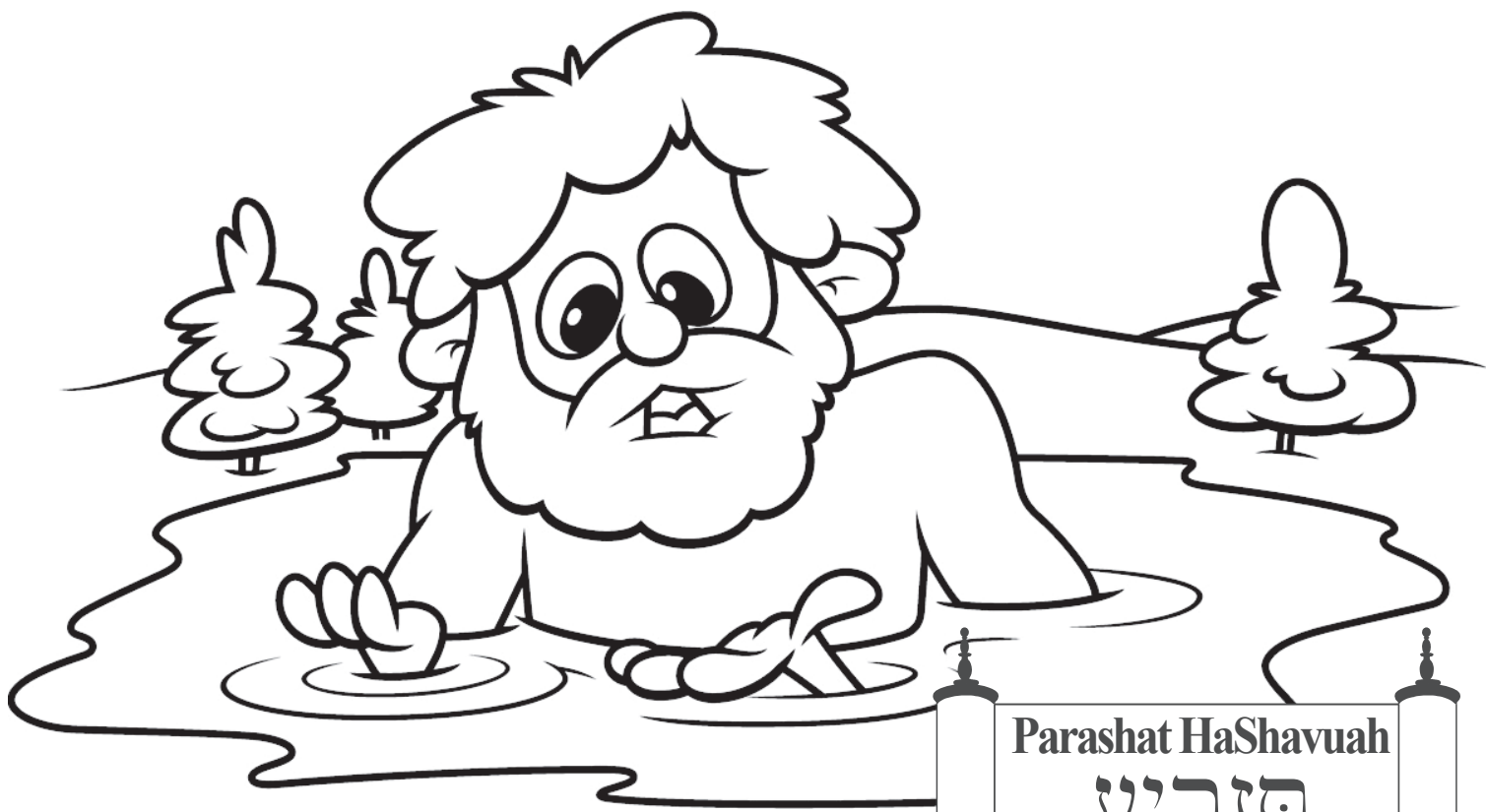




Parashat HaShavuah

תַּזְרִיעַ

Vayikra (Leviticus)
12:1-13:59 Tazria
(Conceived)

Understanding the Parsha

Leviticus 12:1-13:59

We will Learn how to

- 1) **interpret the main theme** (subject) of a **Parsha** (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) **make thematic connections to that Parsha** (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) **learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.**

Tazria/Metzora Part I (Part 2 next week) Due to the length of this study you may wish to do it in two separate sittings.
Leviticus 12-15

In this two part lesson we will uncover different themes by comparing and contrasting Scriptures. So let's get started.

Basic meaning of two words

I. Clean and Unclean — There are two Hebrew words used in these two sidras that are usually translated to English as clean/pure or unclean/contaminated/impure. These English words do not speak the true meaning of the original Hebrew. In fact, there are no English words that can correctly express their true meaning! Some translations use the word ritually clean or ritually unclean. These two words are closer to being correct.

A. Unclean—The Hebrew word translated **unclean**—beginning in Leviticus chapter eleven—is **tamei** (טָמֵא).

B. Clean — The Hebrew word translated **clean** is **tahor** (טָהוֹר).

If you are beginning to learn the Hebrew Scriptures, it is important for you to begin to develop a basic Hebrew vocabulary. Tazria/Metzora is a good place to start learning Hebrew words. In this study we will use **tamei** (ritually unclean) and **tahor** (ritually clean) to avoid confusion. Here is the thematic meaning of what it means to be ritually clean or unclean below.

II. Leper — This word totally misses the mark. The Hebrew word mistakenly translated as leper has nothing to do with the modern-day disease, leprosy.

A. Leprosy is also known as Hansen's Disease. Hansen's disease is a severe nerve disorder where a person loses his ability to sense the physical world! A person who has leprosy can actually rub the skin off of their body over time because they can't feel the area that is wounded. Because of no feeling the person doesn't know that they are hurting themselves.

B. The Hebrew word translated leper is metzora (מִצְרָע). The **metzora** (leper) is a person who had any one of several skin disorders. When one of these different skin disorders made them **tamei** (ritually unclean), it was given the term **tzara'at** (צָרַעַת), which has been wrongly translated as leprosy. It is understandable that translators try to find English words that match as close as possible; however, some words and concepts cannot be properly translated into every language. When that happens, it's best to just transliterate the word into the new language and try to understand it in its original language, time and culture.

C. Proof that the metzora was not a leper

1. Houses and clothing could be affected with **tzara'at**. Obviously, Hansen's Disease could not affect a house, which has no nervous system.

2. If the **metzora's** (leper's) body was completely covered with **tzara'at**, then he was pronounced **tahor** (clean).

Now we can see that the **metzora**, a person afflicted with tzara'at, was in no way suffering from Hansen's Disease (leprosy).

The Scriptural Consequences of Being Tamei (Ritually Unclean) and Tahor (Ritually Clean)



In previous sidras we learned many valuable truths.

A. In Parashat Vayikra, we learned that the book of Leviticus would show us how Israel — each individual — could be in a relationship with Adonai through the service of the Mishkan. The main point to remember is, **how can a sinful man draw near to a Holy God?** Again, THE MAIN POINT taught by Leviticus is how one may draw near to Adonai. We already know that Israel HAD TO APPROACH ADONAI THROUGH BLOOD SACRIFICE. The Hebrew word for offering is **corban** (קָרְבַּן).

What is the Hebrew word corban used for throughout Parashat Vayikra?

0 _____
offering

The root for the word **offering/corban** is קרב, which means **coming near!** That's right. Normally when we think of an offering, we think of the word sacrifice. Sacrifice makes you think of giving up something of value. But this IS NOT the main theme of an offering as presented in the Hebrew Scriptures. An offering is not about giving up something of value. **An offering is about drawing nigh to Adonai!**

B. We also learned that the purpose of the Mishkan is to provide a place where the major events of the revelation at Mount Sinai can continue with all generations.

See if you can draw a line to connect the Thematic Comparison of the Revelations on the Mountain and in the Mishkan



On the Mountain

Moses must wait until called to enter the Mishkan (Leviticus 1:1)

A cloud covers the mountain

Adonai calls Moses using the verb Vayikra

The Shekhinah covers the mountain

Adonai gives commandments to Israel

Moses must wait until called to enter the cloud (Exodus 40:35)

A cloud covers the Mishkan

Adonai calls Moses using the verb Vayikra

In the Mishkan

There is limited access to the mountain

There is limited access to the Mishkan, especially the Holy of Holies

Adonai gives commandments to Israel

The Shekhinah covers the Mishkan

In (Exodus 19-24), we learned that only Moses, Aaron and his sons, the elders of Israel and Joshua were allowed to go onto the mountain. Only Moses was allowed to go into the cloud. We learned the general theme that Adonai is not easily approached. There are different barriers set up to keep us from Him unless we have the proper covering. As Parashat Vayikra (Leviticus 1-5) shows, the average person could approach Adonai's Shekhinah because of the presence of the Mishkan. There was still limited access since only the priests could actually enter the tent. **Through substitutionary blood sacrifice, the average Israelite could draw nigh to Adonai at the Mishkan, which he couldn't do at Mount Sinai.**

II. Now we can discover the **consequences/ramifications** of being tamei (ritually unclean) and tahor (ritually clean).

A. Read Leviticus 12:4. During the time of a woman's impurity after childbirth, what two things could she not do?

She cannot touch any sacred object, neither can she enter into the Mishkan (sanctuary).

Read Leviticus 13:46. During the time that a metzora ("leper") is **tamei**, where does he have to live?

Outside the camp.

Read Leviticus 15:30-31. According to verse 31, what happens after the priest's atonement for one who is tamei?

He S separates them from their state of being † tamei.

According to verse 31, why is it important that Am Yisrael be separated from their state of being tamei?

So that they won't d die!

What effect does ritual uncleanness have on the Mishkan, which is where Adonai dwells?

It d defiles the Mishkan.

From these examples we can see that a person's ritual cleanliness, or lack of it, has a direct effect on whether or not they may enter the Mishkan! This is the issue. The phrase "enter the Mishkan", is the same as saying "draw nigh to Adonai", because the Mishkan is where He dwelled, between the cherubim, over the ark, in the Holy of Holies. So, we see that one must be **tahor** in order to draw nigh to Adonai. But why is this?

B. In the book of Exodus, we learned that Adonai was about to "make Himself known" as YHVH. One part of this revelation is about His Holiness and man being unable to approach him. In every sidra we saw teachings about the difficulty of drawing near to Adonai. As you begin to see the Holiness of Adonai, you begin to see, the sinfulness of man. **His Holiness is absolute and infinite in purity.**

Now, read Leviticus 11:44-45. Although this verse is teaching about kosher requirements, the real issue is not making yourself tamei through what you eat. What two ideas that we've just studied are thematically linked in this passage?

Ritual cleanliness/uncleanliness and Adonai's H Holiness.

The Torah teaches us that **Adonai is Holy**; therefore, if we want to draw near to Him, **we must be holy**. Our actions will determine whether or not we will be tahor or tamei. Obviously, when we are tahor, **we will meet the required prerequisite of personal holiness**. However, if we are tamei, then **the Mishkan is OFF LIMITS!** This is taught throughout the Torah.

Read Exodus 3:5. Why was Moses told not to draw nigh to Adonai?

Because the place he was standing on was H Holy ground.

The Thematic Importance of Becoming Tamei



I. We have seen that Am Yisrael was commanded to walk in holiness. This holiness would ensure that they did not become tamei, enabling them to come into the Mishkan for worship. The instructions given in Leviticus 11-15 concern every part of life. Through these instructions, Adonai has demonstrated what makes one tamei. Look at all of the different ways one could become tamei.

A. One could become tamei by e eating certain animals and † touching

the carcasses of certain animals — Leviticus 11:1-47.

B. One could become tamei by contact with a C corpse —Numbers 5:2.

C. One could become tamei during C childbirth —Leviticus 12:1-8.

D. One could become tamei because of certain b apq discharges—Leviticus 15:1-33.

E. One could become tamei by contracting certain s uys diseases—Leviticus 13:1-59.

II. These five circumstances (leading to a state of ritual impurity) might seem to have nothing to do with each other, but we can find a common theme that links all of them together through the principles of contrast and comparison that we've learned to use in thematic analysis. Let's see how:

A. What is it about a carcasses that makes a person ritually unclean?

The fact that the animals are d peap. Their DEAD carcasses are the source of ritual impurity

What kind of food do the kosher animals eat? P plants.

What are the eating habits of many of the non-kosher animals? They eat other a animals.

Name some ways carnivores obtain their food? They either k kill their prey or they scavenge d dead animals.

B. Knowing that you can become tamei by touching a dead body, what theme is taught by ritual impurity

caused by touching animal carcasses and corpses? Contact with d death.

C. Read Leviticus 17:11. According to this verse, what is the source of life in a living creature?

Its b blood

What happens during childbirth that involves blood? The mother loses b blood during childbirth.

During childbirth, the mother loses life or the life force when she loses blood. How is this fact thematically related to what we just learned above concerning death?

Loss of blood is e enba to losing life-force. If we lose too much blood we will die.

D. The bodily discharges of Leviticus 15 concern men's seminal emissions and the woman's menstrual cycle. What is the purpose of semen?

It carries the substance of l life for the male.

Why do women have a menstrual cycle?

If a woman does not become pregnant, the egg (the substance of l life from the woman) is flushed from the body.

How are these facts thematically related to what we've learned so far about why you become tamei under certain circumstances?

They represent the LOSS OF POTENTIAL l life !

III. Allusions to the Garden of Eden —

So far we have learned two important facts about ritual uncleanness.

- Ritual uncleanness prevents access to the presence of Adonai.
- Ritual uncleanness is linked to death.

These two facts we've discovered are clearly taught in the account of the fall of man and, the fall of man into sin provides the foundation for understanding the laws of ritual purity/impurity!

A. Concerning Life and Death— Earlier we saw that the essence of ritual purity involves issues of LIFE and DEATH. This powerful theme will become one of the primary themes for the rest of the Torah! The theme of life and death was illustrated first in Genesis 3. **What were the names of the two trees in the garden?**

The Tree of L Life and the Tree of the K Knowledge of Good and Evil.

ON THAT DAY (the timing is important), they would D Die.

According to Genesis 3:22, what should happen if Adam and Chava ate fruit from the Tree of Life?

They would L Live forever.

Did Adam and Chava die physically ON THE DAY they sinned? N No

How did they die ON THE DAY that they ate fruit from the forbidden tree?

They were b banished from the garden.

Death is separation from Adonai, the source of life. But more importantly, they were banished from the place where Adonai dwelled! And, they were cut off from the source of life.

How does this thematically relate to becoming ritually impure?

Adam and Chava sinned. The consequence of their sin was that they were put out of the garden, which is where Adonai and the Tree of Life dwelled. When a person becomes tamei they cannot come into the Mishkan/ tabernacle, where Adonai dwells. **Can you see the connection clear and strong?** YES NO

As you can see, the teaching concerning ritual cleanliness goes back as far as the garden! Thematic analysis helps you see it.

B. Ritual Uncleanness and Death — Through the story of the fall of man, we can see why ritual uncleanness is related to death. Now, here's another thematic connection that will help you see this even more clearly.

What commandment did Adam and Chava break?

They a ate something that was forbidden to eat.

How is this thematically related to clean and unclean food?



The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was tamei (ritually U unclean). The Tree of life was tahor (ritually C clean).

The very first sin that placed mankind into darkness concerned a dietary restriction, no different than the ones listed in Leviticus 11. **Do you see the importance of just doing what Adonai says in His word?** If He says certain animals are tamei, should we not just trust Him even though we may not understand the reasons why?

C. In Genesis 3, Adonai punished the woman by saying that she would give birth in pain. Thematically, we can connect birth with the process of death that happened in the garden.

One becomes tamei, or ritually impure, by sinning (e.g., disobeying the commandments), or by coming into contact with death, or by some form of the loss of life. When one is tamei they cannot come into Adonai's holy presence. That is absolutely forbidden. You can only approach Adonai when you are tahor (ritually clean).

The Source of Tzara'at?

I. It is very important that we understand why and how someone could become a **metzora** by having **tzara'at**. We also need to understand its meaning. What was the meaning behind this affliction? What was its purpose? Below we will try to discover what the Scriptures teach about the source and significance of **tzara'at** by comparing and contrasting information that we have learned from passages teaching about it.

The Source of Tzara'at— Read the following stories about these people who were struck with **tzara'at**: Numbers 12:9-16, II Chronicles 26:16-21 and II Kings 5:1-27.

What was the source of tzara'at in each story? It was a p punishment from Adonai.

In the stories concerning Miriam and King Uzziah, the source is supernatural, not natural. Adonai caused it to happen.

Do you see a thematic connection between all three of these stories as to the reason WHY Adonai smote these people with tzara'at?

In all three stories the person struck with **tzara'at** challenged the a authority of Adonai's anointed servant!

Even though the Scripture does say that Miriam spoke against Moses, by thematically comparing three separate stories teaching about the same thing (**tzara'at**), we see that the Torah is trying to teach us that **tzara'at** was inflicted upon those who rejected and/or questioned Adonai's anointed!

Tzara'at is an affliction visited upon a person by Adonai. And, we see that **tzara'at** may be connected with rejection of the Divine authority of the priest and prophet.

The Thematic Significance of Tzara'at

I. Now for the most important thematic revelation of this study. What is the significance of tzara'at? What did it stand for? What lessons does it teach us?

Read Numbers 12:9-16. In Numbers 12:12, **how did Aaron characterize Miriam's affliction?**

He compared her to ONE WHO IS d dead!

What did he say she looked like? He said she looked like a (DEAD) s stillborn baby.

Read Numbers 5:2 and Leviticus 13:46. Where was a metzora required to live? O
of the camp of Israel! outside

What happened to social contact, especially with family members? They were cut off from ALL normal contact with even their family because they had to live O outside of the camp of Israel.

By living outside of the camp the **metzora** was cut off from the Mishkan. They were cut off from the source of all life! Remember Adam and Chava and the thematic connections? Adam and Chava experienced DEATH the day they sinned. On that day they were kicked outside the camp (out of the garden), and separated from He who is the source of all life. They died, and so does the metzora when he can no longer draw nigh to Adonai, the source of life.

Read Leviticus 13:45-46. There are five things a metzora must do.

1) He must † tear his clothes, 2) uncover his h head, 3) cover his upper l lip,
4) cry out, "† tamei, tamei" and 5) live in isolation.

The first three actions were routinely performed by those who were mourning the DEATH of a loved one.

Read Leviticus 14:1-8. What is the subject? The purification procedure for a m metzora.

Read Numbers 19:1-13. What is the subject? Instructions for making the purification water that is to be sprinkled on anyone who has had contact with a C corpse.

See the thematic connections of the purification procedure for the metzora and the procedure for making the purification water.

- Both procedures require the use of crimson thread!
- Both procedures require the use of hyssop!
- Both procedures require the use of cedar wood!
- Both procedures require the one being purified to be sprinkled with water!

Here's the connection. The procedure for purification of a **metzora** is clearly thematically related to the procedure for purification of someone who has come into contact with a corpse (the realm of DEATH)!

The thematic connections show that the **metzora** was essentially **THE WALKING, LIVING DEAD!** That's right. The thematic connections clearly paint this picture. If we want to see what death is like, then we look to the metzora, who was totally cut off from the presence of Adonai in the Mishkan as well as all human relationships. Walking about in a continuous state of mourning, for the death of what? FOR THEIR OWN DEATH! How tragic. Now we can see how the **metzora** was related to all the other forms of ritual uncleanness. They are all related by DEATH, SIN and DEATH. Next week we will see how these teachings about what is ritually clean and unclean provide the basis for some of the most powerful teaching concerning the work of the Messiah! I can't wait!!!

