

מִצְרָע

METZORA/THE LEPROUS ONE

Vayikra/Leviticus 14:1-15:33

This Torah portion is all about proper cleansing from a disorder commonly called “**leprosy**,” or in Hebrew, “**tzara’at**.” We can actually find many lessons in these chapters, for as believers in Messiah, we have been birthed into a set-apart and royal priesthood that must be able to clearly discern between the profane and the holy, the clean and the unclean. Israel was in fact held to account for not being that “**set apart priesthood**”:

Ezekiel 22:26 "Her priests have violated My Torah and profaned My holy things; **they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean**; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

The priest’s job during the early process of the one with “**tzara’at**” was to diagnose and to “**teach**” what may have caused the blemish and how to correct the behavior:

Vayikra/Leviticus 10:10 "that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,¹¹ "and **that you may teach the children of Israel**

Vayikra 13:1 And וַיִּדְבֹר spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying:² "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body *like* a leprous sore, then **he shall be brought to Aharon the priest or to one of his sons the priests**.

This week we read how after the one who was affected had heard the reproof of Torah, repented, and corrected his behavior... then it was time for “**cleansing**.”

Vayikra 14:2 "This shall be the **Torah of the leper for the day of his cleansing**: He shall be brought to the **priest**.³ "And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine *him*; and indeed, *if* the leprosy is healed in the leper,⁴ "then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living *and* clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.

The “**priest**” was the only one able to pronounce the “**metzora clean**”:

Vayikra 14:7 "And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and **shall pronounce him clean**, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.

In **Matthew 8**, there a story of Yeshua healing some lepers, and then telling them to go and follow the instructions that we read about here in **Vayikra**. Yes, Yeshua certainly did heal them, but as He had not yet assumed the position of High Priest, He could not pronounce them clean. Instead, He gave them the command to “**be cleansed**,” and then “**show yourself to the priest**”:



Matthew 8:3 Then Yeshua put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴ And Yeshua said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moshe commanded, as a testimony to them."

However, after Yeshua's death and resurrection, He became our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Even today when we accept His teaching, repent, and correct our behavior, then He pronounces us "**clean**"!

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The live bird "**dipped in the blood and let loose in the open field**" may be a picture of those believers, "**cleansed**" and marked forever by the blood of Messiah. Now they must go out into the "**open field**" as Kingdom workers to bring in a harvest!

Vayikra 14:6 "As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. ⁷ "And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.

Notice the references in the verses below to **Vayikra** as **King David** prayed to be "**cleansed with hyssop**," crying out for restoration, asking that in a "**clean**" state he could be sent as a "**teacher**" to instruct "**sinners**" in the ways of יהוה so that they might be "**converted**." Actually, our Kingdom job should be no different!

Psalms 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me... ⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom. ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O Elohim, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.

We notice from the process of cleansing, that two times the "**metzora**" must go through quite a ritual of "**cleaning himself**," while staying outside of his tent for "**seven days**." After his first cleansing, he lives outside his tent in his "**shaven**" state, as a witness to the community of his transformation. Here is a wonderful picture of taking responsibility to "**cleanse**" oneself, getting rid of disobedience associated with the old man, cleansed by the Water of the Word, and separating oneself from the old life. The "**washing of his clothes and the shaving off of his hair**" shows his complete surrender.

Vayikra 14:8 "He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days.

But then, on the “**seventh day**,” he does an even further “**cleansing**,” after which he is ritually “**clean**” and once again able to approach the altar of the Almighty. It is a good picture of one who has been able to continue on with his new, “**clean**” lifestyle, having grown in his faith after his initial repentance:

Vayikra 14:9 "But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows -- all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.¹⁰ " And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil.

Salvation and the initial “**cleansing**” by Messiah do not end with accepting Yeshua. There must be the further commitment to the kingdom and living a totally set-apart (holy) life, meditating on the Word and working on the “**cleansing**” of the “**heart**” as David prayed in **Psalms 51**.

It seems that there may be more to this “**seventh day**.” Could these two “**cleansing**” requirements point to the two comings of Messiah? With Messiah’s first coming, we are declared “**clean**” in Him, yet when He returns on the “**seventh day**,” what will He find? Will Yeshua find that His chosen ones have continued to grow in their faith (still “**clean**”), living lives set-apart for His Kingdom?

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In **Vayikra 14:14**, the instructions are given for the “**cleansed**” one to have the blood of the sacrifice put on the “**tip of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot**”:

Vayikra 14:14 "The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

These applications have to do with listening, service, and a humble walk.

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does יהוה require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your Elohim?

1 John 2:6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

A “**humble walk**” implies obedience and submission to our Father’s authority. This former “**metzora**” is ready for service in the Kingdom’s royal priesthood! But there is one more step...to be “**anointed**”:

Vayikra 14:15 "And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand.¹⁶ "Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before יהוה.¹⁷ "And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put *some* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass

offering. ¹⁸ "The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So, the priest shall make atonement for him before יהוה.

First the blood “**cleanses**” and now the person is “**anointed**” with the “**oil**” of the Spirit. This is the two-step process. We have been “**cleansed**” by the blood and the living water of Messiah and now equipped by the “**oil**” of the Spirit to walk in the way He has prepared for us.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of Elohim our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Messiah Yeshua our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Messiah and has anointed us is Elohim, ²² who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

The section dealing with the “**tzara’at in the house**” is interesting on many levels. We are told that it is יהוה who is the One who has put the “**plague of tzara’at in a house**.”

Vayikra 14:34 "When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the plague of tzara’at in a house in the land of your possession

Just as the Almighty gave the priests the responsibility of diagnosing the individual with a skin disorder, now the priest will go in and take a look at the “**house**”:

Vayikra 14:35 "and he who owns the “**house**” (**bayit בַּיִת**) comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me that *there is* some plague in the house,' ³⁶ "then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes into it to examine the plague, that all that *is* in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house.

There are detailed instructions for declaring the “**house**” clean or unclean, but let us consider how the Hebrew word for “**house**” (**bayit בַּיִת**) is used throughout Scripture:

- Describes a **nation**:
 - **Shemot/Exodus 16:31** And the house (bayit – בַּיִת) of Israel called its name Manna. And it *was* like white coriander seed, and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.
 - **Joshua 21:45** Not a word failed of any good thing which יהוה had spoken to the house (bayit – בַּיִת) of Israel. All came to pass.
- Describes a **family**:

- **Bereshith/Genesis 35:2** And Ya'acov said to his house (bayit – בֵּית) and to all who *were* with him, "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments.
- **Joshua 24:15** "And if it seems evil to you to serve יְהוָה, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house (bayit – בֵּית), we will serve יְהוָה."
- Describes the **congregation of believers in Messiah**:
 - **1 Timothy 3:14** These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵ but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house (bayit – בֵּית) of Elohim, which is the **congregation of the living Elohim**, the pillar and ground of the truth.
 - **Hebrews 3:6** but Messiah as a Son over His own house (bayit – בֵּית), whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.
- The “house” (bayit – בֵּית) was “יהוה’s House,” the place “where His glory dwelt”:
 - **Psalm 26:8** יְהוָה, I have loved the habitation of Your House (bayit – בֵּית), and the place where Your glory dwells.
 - **Psalm 122:1** A Song of Ascents. Of David. I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the House (bayit – בֵּית) of יהוה."
 - **2 Chronicles 5:14** so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of יהוה filled the House (bayit – בֵּית) of Elohim.
- The “House of Elohim” has a High Priest who is able to inspect and cleanse and pronounce clean those “living stones” (who are the believers) who are being built up as a “spiritual house, a holy priesthood”:
 - **1 Peter 2:4** Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by Elohim *and* precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house (bayit – בֵּית), a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Elohim through Messiah Yeshua.

So, with all that information about “houses,” we can begin to understand more about how the Almighty is adamant about the “cleanliness” of the “House” where His glory shall dwell. In **Vayikra 14**, the “priest” had the authority to say that some of the “stones” should be removed:

Vayikra 14:40 "then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which *is* the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city.

Likewise, **Sha’ul** (Paul) echoes this thought of keeping the “house” of Elohim clean by removing the “evil person among them”:

1 Corinthians 5:9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner -- not even to eat with such a person. ¹² For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? ¹³ But those who are outside Elohim judges. Therefore "**put away from among you the evil person.**"

Keeping the “**House**” clean is imperative. As difficult as this all may be to understand, our Torah reading ends with verses that just might shed a little more light:

Vayikra 15:31 ' Thus you shall **separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My Tabernacle that is among them.** ³² 'This is the Torah for one who has a discharge, and *for him* who emits semen and is unclean thereby, ³³ 'and for her who is indisposed because of her *customary* impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean.' "

These verses are a summary of what several chapters in Vayikra have been trying to teach. “**Unclean**” is about ritual impurity and the possibility of defiling the Almighty’s “**House!**” And notice that the penalty for not obeying these purity regulations is “**death!**”

We have spent weeks now talking about the many actions that can cause one to become “**unclean.**” But not all “**uncleanness**” is the same. And the way to become “**clean**” again is not the same either. Not all actions that make one “**unclean**” are sinful. For example, intimacy within marriage is normal and to be expected, yet it results in a state of “**uncleanness**” that lasts until sundown. There are no sacrifices required.

Sin, however, always results in “**uncleanness.**” And that is the difference between **Israel** and the **Gentile nations**. Israel is אלהים’s chosen people. He has given Israel a remedy for their “**unclean**” state in order to enter into His “**House.**” The Gentiles did not have that, unless they were grafted into Israel. They must become part of Israel in order to go from “**unclean to clean**” and then from “**clean to holy.**”

And this is the Gospel message! By accepting the work of Messiah, any repentant person is able to be grafted into Israel and thus made “**clean**” and “**holy!**” Yeshua makes it possible for us to be in His “**House!**” HalleluYah!

Jude 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you **without blemish Before the Presence of His glory** with exceeding joy

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle

