



Parsha Tazria (Conceived) ~ Metzora (the Leper)

VaYiqra (Leviticus) 12:1 ~ 15:33

Beit Emet Congregation ~ Jerusalem, Israel & Vancouver, WA

Ben Ehrhardt, Shamash

4/17/10

www.hearoisrael.org

In last week's *parsha*, "**Shemini**", we read about the commands (*mitzvot*) of cleanliness and purity regarding animals and birds. This week's double *parsha* speaks to these commands, and still others, regarding men and women. The first part of our study this week (**Tazria**) takes its name, and is about, the miracle of conception and birth. We begin with **VaYiqra / Leviticus 12:1-8; And YHVH spoke to Moshe, saying, "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, saying, 'When a woman has conceived, and has given birth to a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days, as in the days of her monthly separation she is unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin is circumcised. And she remains in the blood of her cleansing thirty-three days. She does not touch whatever is set-apart, and she does not come into the set-apart place until the days of her cleansing are completed. But if she gives birth to a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her monthly separation, and she remains in the blood of her cleansing for sixty-six days. And when the days of her cleansing are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she brings to the priest a lamb a year old, as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the Tent of Meeting. And he shall bring it before YHVH, and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the Torah for her who has given birth to a male or a female. And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.'**"

King David wrote of how YHVH knew him from his conception in **Tehillim / Psalms 139**. He writes in **verses 1 -2; O YHVH, You have searched me and know me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought from afar. You sift my path and my lying down, and know well all my ways.** As he goes on, we read in **verses 15-16; My substance was not concealed from You, when I was made in secret, knit together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body. And in Your book all my members were written, the days they were formed, while as yet there was none of them.**

And, if this baby is a boy, the mother is unclean, as in her monthly separation for seven days. The son is then circumcised on the eighth day; and, she remains in the blood of her cleansing for 33 days. She does not touch whatever is set-apart and does not enter the Set-apart Place (*the confines of the Tabernacle, or later, the Temple grounds*), until her time of cleansing is complete. We see also that if the mother gives birth to a girl; her time of cleansing is doubled, from a total of 40 days to 80 days.

We've seen in numerous studies together that "40" is the number of "learning" and "testing". Remember, there were Yisra'el's 40 years of learning and testing in the wilderness and Yahshua's 40 days of testing in the wilderness. Moshe had three 40 year periods of teaching and testing in his life (40 in Egypt, 40 in Midyan and 40 in the wilderness with B'nei Yisra'el). But also, Moshe spent three 40 days periods of learning on Mt. Sinai directly from YHVH. Eliyahu, the prophet, spent 40 days in the cave on Mt. Sinai, as well. And also, Yahshua spent 40 days after His resurrection further teaching His talmidim.

But, why would there be a doubling of the cleansing period for the birth of a girl? Well, as you might guess, there are several opinions among the rabbis. One opinion suggests that, in the case of the birth of a girl, the mother's separation is symbolic of her daughter's first cycle. The other, and most prevalent opinion, is that it is because of what Elohim said to Chawah in the Garden in **B'reshith 3:16**; *To the woman He said, "I greatly increase your pain in labor and your conception; bring forth children in pain. And your desire is for your husband, and he does rule over you."* The Hebrew word for "desire" here is "tēshuwqah" (tav-shin-vav-kuf-hey), which is from the root word "shuwq" meaning "to give abundance to". The connotation here is that the woman will "desire" or "long for" her husband to give her children. In this context, the rabbis suggest that the mother is to set-apart for the 80 days (two times that for a man child) because of Chawah's sin of "desire" and Elohim's pronouncement that women will desire, or long to, conceive and give birth, even in pain, in order to rectify this sin.

Then, we read about the offerings that the new mother is to bring to the Priest before YHVH. The burnt offering (**olah** or **ascending offering**) is to be a lamb, a year old. If she cannot afford a lamb, then she is to bring pigeon or a turtledove, to go with the one she brings as a sin offering. Remember, the "sin offering" (**chatta'ah**) represents not only sin, but our sin nature also. Now, for the "lamb" of the burnt offering, **verse 6** uses the word "**kebes**" (kaf-bet-sin) and **verse 8** uses the word "**seh**" (sin-hey). Both of these words mean "lamb" from either the sheep or the goats. However, when "**kebes**" is used, it is specifying a "male" lamb.

Now, for the sin offering we have either the "turtledove", which is "tor" (tav-vav-reish) or the "pigeon", which is "yonah" (yud-vav-nun-hey). The "turtledove" is a term of endearment that Scripture uses to describe Yisra'el, YHVH's beloved. In fact, it appears elsewhere in TaNaK in this context in; **Tehillim (Psalms) 74:19** and in **Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:14, 5:2 and 6:9**. In his book, "**Kol Ha Tor**" or "**Voice of the Turtledove**", Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman (*the Gaon of Vilna*) writes that this "voice" (*the collective voice of B'nei Yisra'el*) heard again in the Land, in the last days, will signal the coming of Mashiach. Hence, the "turtledove" also identifies with "**Mashiach**".

The other bird that can be brought as the "chatta'ah" or "sin offering" is the "pigeon". The Hebrew word here is "yonah" (Strong's #3123). Yonah (*Jonah*) is the name of YHVH's prophet to Nineveh. And, as we know regarding Yonah, when the Pharisees asked Yahshua for a sign to prove Who He was, we read in **Mattityahu 12:38-40**; *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from You." But He answering, said to them, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Yonah. For as Yonah was three days and three nights in the stomach of the great fish, so shall the Son of Adam be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Yonah is spelled "yud-vav-nun-hey". Remember the letters of Hebrew words have meanings also; yud=hand, vav=hook or connection, nun=Heir to the throne (*Mashiach*) and hey=revelation. So, Yonah (or the sign of Yonah) is "the hand that points to" the "connection" of "**Mashiach**" in the "revelation". Now, the numeric value of Yonah is 71 which equals "**I'Adonai**" (**my Master**) and "**milah**" or **circumcision**. So too, this "pigeon" also identifies with Mashiach. It **is** all about Him.

Now, for the balance of **Parsha Tazria** (*conceived* and/or *delivered*) and most of **Parsha Metzora** (*leper*), we read about a disease called “**tzara’at**”, which most often translated as “**leprosy**”. Now, **leprosy** has long been taught by the church to be the disease referred to in the Torah as **tzara’at**. When the Hebrew Torah was first translated into Greek as the Septuagint, the word “**tzara’at**” was translated as “**lepra**”, since there was no word in Greek for this condition. So, when the later translations into other languages, such as English, were done; “**leprosy**” became the operative word. But, as we read these verses in **VaYiqra / Leviticus 13**, we will clearly see that the description of “**tzara’at**” differs from our understanding of *leprosy* (**Hansen’s disease**). In fact, it’s not like **any** well-known, modern day, dermatological disease, as many of the symptoms don’t match. We also see from Torah this week that it infects not only humans, but their clothing and/or their homes. So, what is it then?

Let’s look at **VaYiqra / Leviticus 13:1-15**; *And YHVH spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying, “When a man 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 tzara’at, then he shall be brought to Aharon the priest or to one of his sons the priests. And the priest shall look at the infection on the skin of the body. And if the hair on the infection has turned white, and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is tzara’at. And the priest shall look at him, and pronounce him unclean. But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall shut up the infected one seven days. And the priest shall look at him on the seventh day and see, if the infection appears to be as it was, and the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall shut him up another seven days. And the priest shall look at him again on the seventh day and see, if the infection has darkened, and the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. It is a scab, and he shall wash his garments and be clean. But if the scab spreads further over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. And the priest shall look and see, if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is tzara’at. When the infection of tzara’at is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest. And the priest shall look and see, if the swelling on the skin is white, and it has turned the hair white, and there is a spot of raw flesh in the swelling, it is an old tzara’at on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. He does not shut him up, for he is unclean. And if tzara’at breaks out all over the skin, and the tzara’at shall cover all the skin of the infected one, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall look and see, if the tzara’at has covered all his body, he shall pronounce the infected one clean. It has all turned white, he is clean. But the day raw flesh appears on him, he is unclean. And the priest shall look at the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean – the raw flesh is unclean, it is tzara’at.”*

We have a couple of interesting things here to look at for a few minutes. First, when someone discovered a lesion or a *bright* spot on the skin, they would go to the Kohen (*priest*) and he would examine it and make a determination as to whether it was *tzara’at*. If there were no secondary symptoms, then he would either declare him clean or re-inspect him in seven days. If, after seven days, the priest saw a worsening or deepening, as with the secondary symptoms, then he would declare that person a “**metzora**” (*the one who has tzara’at*). But, if there were no secondary symptoms after two weeks, then the person was declared clean even if the primary lesion persisted.

Now, before we look more closely at the symptoms, let’s read about a few more in **VaYiqra / Leviticus 13:16-28**; *“Or when the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. And the priest shall look at him and see, if the infection has turned white, then the*

priest shall pronounce the infected one clean, he is clean. And when the body has a boil in the skin, and it is healed, and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish white, then it shall be seen by the priest. And the priest shall look and see, if it appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is tzara'at which has broken out of the boil. But if the priest looks at it and sees no white hairs in it, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall shut him up seven days; and if it has spread further over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is tzara'at. But if the bright spot stays in its place, it has not spread, it is the scar of the boil, and the priest shall pronounce him clean. Or when the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn shall become a bright spot, reddish white or white, then the priest shall look at it and see, if the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it is tzara'at broken out in the burn. And the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is tzara'at. But if the priest looks at it and sees there are no white hairs in the bright spot, and it is not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall shut him up seven days. And the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. If it spreads further over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is tzara'at. But if the bright spot stays in its place, and has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn. And the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is the scar from the burn."

Now, let's finish with this thought, with **verses 13:29-46**; *"And when a man, or a woman, has an infection on the head or in the beard, then the priest shall look at the infection and see, if it appears deeper than the skin, and there is thin yellow hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is an eruption, tzara'at of the head or beard. But when the priest looks at the infection of the eruption and sees that it does not appear deeper than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall shut up the one with the infection of the eruption seven days. And on the seventh day the priest shall look at the infection and see, if the eruption has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the eruption does not appear deeper than the skin, 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. And on the seventh day the priest shall look at the eruption and see, if the eruption has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. And he shall wash his garments, and he shall be clean. But if the eruption spreads further over the skin after his cleansing, then the priest shall look at him and see, if the eruption has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair, he is unclean. But if the eruption appears to have stayed, and there is black hair grown up in it, the eruption has healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean. And when a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, white bright spots, then the priest shall look and see, if the bright spots on the skin of the body are dull white, it is a white spot that grows on the skin, he is clean. And when a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald, he is clean. And if the hair has fallen from his forehead, he is bald on the forehead, he is clean. And when there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white infection, it is tzara'at breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. And the priest shall look at it and see, if the swelling of the infection is reddish white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of tzara'at on the skin of the body, he is a metzora, he is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, without fail, his infection is on his head. As for the metzora who has the infection, his garments are torn, and his head is uncovered, and he has to cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 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.*

First, we need to understand that these symptoms are not the symptoms of leprosy. And, as for the priest inspecting the candidate for metzora in seven days for changes to his symptoms; leprosy is a much slower progressive disease. An infected person could show no change in symptoms for sometimes months.

OK, as we try to understand just what **tzara'at** is, let's look at these symptoms and discuss the areas of the body where occurred. As I said earlier, it was the priest who made the inspection and was the one who declared the person either unclean or clean. I can't help but think that this means whatever **tzara'at** is, there's something spiritual going on here. Now, you'll remember that the first thing we learn is that this happens to a "**man**" (*adam*), referring to "*human being*". Secondly we see that the symptoms appear on the skin. The word for "**skin**" used here in Hebrew is "**owr**" (Strong's #5785) and is spelled "*ayin-vav-reish*". Remember the meanings of the letters? Ayin = eye, vav = connection and reish = head. So, the eye is connected to head. Brilliant. But, think a minute what the eye sees, our head holds that picture for a very long time. Why do you think our mind has to be renewed?

There are Hebrew word plays at work here also. You see there's a homonym for "**owr**". When you replace the "**ayin**" with an "**aleph**" you get "**ohr**" which is "**light**". So, when the "**eye**" (**ayin**) is connected to the head, there is "**skin and flesh**". But, when the "**aleph**" (**Master**) is connected to the "**reish**" or "**head**" instead, there is "**light**". Then, while **verse 2** in the ISR Scriptures and other English translations read a *leprous infection*, The Hebrew says "**nega tzara'at**" (or *plague of tzara'at*). Here we have a double word play. You see, the letters in "**nega**" or *plague* (*nun-gimmel-ayin*) when rearranged and the vowel point changes, it becomes "**oneg**" or *delight*. And, the letters in **tzara'at** can be rearranged to spell "**Atzeret**" (*holiday or great day*). In the Sefrei Mussar (*Ethical Writings*) the sages teach that when Adam and Chawah were created, they were beings of "**light**". But, when they sinned, the "**light**" was covered by *skin*. But, the *skin* has pores that let enough of Elohim's *light* in to guide us. However, they add when we sin, "**Nega Tzara'at**" (*plague of tzara'at*) covers those pores and we are in darkness, outside the camp; which is where these "**metzora'im**", those diagnosed with **tzara'at**, were made to dwell, until they were pronounced clean by the Priest. They say that when we "**teshuva**" (*repent and return*), we change the **owr** [*skin*] to **ohr** [*light*], the "**Nega Tzara'at**" (*plague of tzara'at*) is turned into "**Oneg**" and "**Atzeret**" (*a delight and a great day*).

The rest of this isn't too complicated; but, bear with me here and we'll sum up in a bit. Next, we see a "**swelling**", a "**scab**" or a "**bright spot**". The Hebrew word here for "**swelling**" is "**sehayth**" which literally means an "**uprising**"; which you can take that to mean either "**swelling**" or "**revolt**". It's spelled "*shin-aleph-tav*". Now, "**scab**" is the Hebrew word "**sappach'ath**" (*samech-pey-chet-tav*), which means "**lesion**" and is from the root word "**saphach**" which means to be "**joined or attached to**". Then there's "**bright spot**" or "**bohereth**" in Hebrew (*beit-hey-reish-tav*), which means both "**bright**" and "**inflamed**" or "**inflammatory**".

Think about this also. "*Swelling, scab, bright spot*" ~ "*sehayth, saphach, bohereth*" ~ "*uprising, joined to, inflammatory*". Are these marks on the skin (or *on the light*) the fruits of some sin? This why the priest needed to examine him. Are we not to examine our fruit often? Not to condemn or shame one another; but, to keep **tzara'at** (*the fruit of sin*) from spreading in the camp.

Oh, and we can't forget that when we started this section, we read that this "**stuff**", this "**tzara'at**" was in or on the skin. Well, it actually said the skin of his "**body**" or "**flesh**", depending on your translation. The Hebrew word used here for "**flesh**" or "**body**", is as we discussed last week, "**basar**" and also means "**bearing the Good News**". So this "**skin of the flesh**" also refers to the "**light bearing the Gospel**". It's our "**witness**" folks. We all know what sin does to our witness; especially an *inflammatory* sin of the *open mouth*.

As we read on we see that the priest is looking for “**white**” patches on the skin as well; to see if these fruits were “**white**” or “**dead**”. Why **white**? The Hebrew word used here for “**white**” is “**laban**” (*lamed-beit-nun*) and also means “**to purify**” or be “**pure**”. But remember, “**white**” also signifies death. **Tzara’at** is called the “**living death**”. Mt. Ebal, the mountain of cursings from *Debarim* and *Yehoshua*, was called so, because it was totally barren and dead, covered only with white rocks. While Mt. Gerizim, the mountain of blessings, right next door, was very fertile and green. Can **death** “**purify**” or “**make white**”? Rabbi Sha’ul spoke several times on the “**death**” of the “**old man**”, the “**sin nature**” within us, as being a part of our “**working out our salvation with fear and trembling**”. The picture here with **tzara’at** is that “**white skin**” is “**dead skin**”. But, that if it’s only on the surface. Then the death is not progressing. But instead, we are actually healing. **Verse 13** suggests this; “**then the priest shall look and see, if the tzara’at has covered all his body, he shall pronounce the infected one clean. It has all turned white, he is clean.**” So, even if a person is completely covered with “**white**” or “**dead**” skin, if it’s on the surface only, it means they are not necessarily unclean any longer. That depends on what the condition of the *flesh* (**basar**) underneath is like. However, if a white hair is found coming out from the midst of the white dead skin (**ohr – light**) then **death** is feeding on **death**; as the rabbis teach, and you’ve got a serious problem.

We also see in **verse 29** that men and women could get **tzara’at** in the hair or in the beard. I won’t spend a lot of time on this here. However, the “**head**” or “**rosh**”, in Hebrew thought, represents wisdom. The beard represents age, experience and eldership authority. Here, according to the rabbis, YHVH is saying that no matter how wise you may be, or what age you may be, or what status you have achieved in the “**camp**” (*the Body*), you must be very careful what comes out of your mouth. YHVH said in **Mattityahu 15:10-11**; **And calling the crowd near, He said to them, “Hear and understand: Not that which goes into the mouth defiles the man, but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”** Also to the Pharisees He said in **Matt. 12:34**; **“Brood of adders! How are you able to speak what is good – being wicked? For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.”**

Tzara’at is the fruit of one particular sin, as the rabbis suggest, “**lashon hara**” (the *evil tongue* or *evil speech*). Let’s look at a well-known example. **B’midbar 12:1-15**; **Now Miryam and Aharon spoke against Moshe because of the Kushite woman whom he had taken, for he had taken a Kushite woman. And they said, “Has YHVH spoken only through Moshe? Has He not also spoken through us?” And YHVH heard it. And the man Moshe was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth. And suddenly YHVH said to Moshe, and Aharon, and Miryam, “You three, come out to the Tent of Meeting!” So the three came out. And YHVH came down in the column of cloud and stood in the door of the Tent, and called Aharon and Miryam. And they both went forward. And He said, “Hear now My words: If your prophet is of YHVH, I make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moshe, he is trustworthy in all My house. I speak with him mouth to mouth, and plainly, and not in riddles. And he sees the form of YHVH. So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moshe?” And the displeasure of YHVH burned against them, and He left. And the cloud turned away from above the Tent, and look: Miryam was tzara’at, as white as snow! And Aharon turned toward Miryam, and look: metzora! And Aharon said to Moshe, “Oh, my master! Please do not hold against us the sin in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead when coming out of its mother’s womb, with our flesh half consumed!” And Moshe cried out to YHVH, saying, “O EI, please heal her, please!” And YHVH said to Moshe, “If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and after that let her be readmitted.” And Miryam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not set out until Miryam**

was readmitted. I'm pretty sure that when Miryam and Aharon spoke against Moshe, it was not to his face. I think if they had, he would have answered them. While they might have been upset over Moshe's choice of a wife, they chose to commit "**lashon hara**" against him, if even amongst themselves, regarding his walk with YHVH, in their pride by asking; "**Has YHVH spoken only through Moshe? Has He not also spoken through us?**" That's how it usually begins, with the questioning of a person's walk, or their character. That's why it can be so damaging. The fact that YHVH confronts them on Moshe's behalf, speaks also to the fact that Moshe's reputation was important to Elohim.

Let me say here that I'm not saying, nor is Torah, that you cannot question questionable behavior. In fact, Torah is quite specific about how to do this. In short, you first confront the person, to their face, one-on-one. If that doesn't resolve your issue, then you bring that brother to two people as witnesses. If the person is in the wrong, or in sin, and this does not resolve the matter, then that person is brought before the elders for correction.

In his discourse of how to treat your brother, when lending, in **Debarim 24** as Moshe repeats these ordinances for the "**next**" generation, prior to entering the Land, we read in the middle of the chapter, **verses 6-10**; "**No one takes in pledge the lower or the upper millstone, for he would be taking a life in pledge. When a man is found kidnapping any of his brothers of the children of Yisra'el, and treats him harshly or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die. Thus you shall purge the evil from your midst. Take heed, in an outbreak of tzara'at, to diligently guard and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, teach you. As I have commanded them, so you shall guard to do. Remember what YHVH your Elohim did to Miryam on the way when you came out of Mitsrayim. When you lend your brother a loan, do not go into his house to get his pledge.**" Right in the middle of the taking of collateral and lending money, YHVH makes mention again of **Tzara'at**, the fruit of "**lashon hara**", and the example He made of Miryam.

We should also make a note here that in our source text, **VaYiqra 13:45** says; "**As for the one with Tzara'at who has the infection, his garments are torn, and his head is uncovered, and he has to cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'**" So, how would you cover your upper lip? Some translations make it sound like you put a covering over the lip. However, from the Hebrew it simply says "**cover**" as with your hand. Got the picture? His "**head**" (or *true thoughts*) are uncovered and he must acknowledge his sin; the first step to forgiveness and healing.

VaYiqra 13 concludes with an outbreak of **tzara'at** in a garment in **verses 47-59**; "**And when a garment has an infection tzara'at in it, in a woolen garment or in a linen garment, or in the warp or in the weft of linen or wool, or in leather or in any leather-work, and the infection shall be greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, or in the warp or in the weft, or in any leather object, it is an infection of tzara'at and shall be shown to the priest. And the priest shall look at the infection and shut up the infected one seven days. And he shall look at the infection on the seventh day. And when the infection has spread in the garment, or in the warp or in the weft, or in the leather or any leatherwork, the infection is an active tzara'at, it is unclean. And he shall burn that garment, or the warp or the weft, in wool or in linen, or any leather object in which the infection is, for it is tzara'at. It is burned with fire. But if the priest looks and sees that the infection has not spread in the garment, or in the warp or in the weft, or in any leather object, then the priest shall give command, and they shall wash that in which the infection is. And he shall shut it up another seven days. And the priest shall look at the infection after it has been washed and see, if the infection has not changed its appearance, though the infection has not spread, it is unclean, and burn it in the fire – it is eaten away, in its inside or outside. And if the priest shall look and see that the infection has faded after**

washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, or out of the warp, or out of the weft, or out of the leather. And if it is still seen in the garment, or in the warp or in the weft, or in any leather object, it is a spreading infection. Burn it with fire, that in which the infection is. And if you wash the garment, or the warp or the weft, or any leather object, if the infection has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean. This is the Torah of the infection of tzara'at in a garment of wool or linen, or in the warp or in the weft, or in any leather object, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean."

We're not going real deep with this, due to the time; but, let me share a few things here. As you may already know, a "**garment**" represents your covering. Not a person as a covering; but, rather ideals, beliefs, etc. Torah is a "**garment**". Your statement of faith is a "**garment**". What you believe and practice is your "**covering**" or "**garment**". The Hebrew word used here is "**beged**" (*beit-gimmel-dalet*), which in addition to clothing, also means "**deceit**", as it relates to "**covering up**" the truth. We need to keep an eye on what is covering us. Ahmein? "**Woolen**" here is the Hebrew word "**tsemer**" (*tzadee-mem-reish*), which comes from an animal. In its highest form, we see "**whiteness**" as "**purity**" as in "**white as wool**". We also see that the "**prophet's mantle**" is made of animal hair, as with Eliyahu and Yochanan the Immerser. "**Linen**" or "**pishteh**" (*pey-shin-tav*) is from the earth; and in its highest form likewise represents "**purity**", as in the "**Priestly garments**" and the "**linen garments**" given to the Bride of Mashiach. "**Leather**" here again is "**owr**" (*ayin-vav-reish*), which is "**skin**" or "**hide**" and comes from a dead animal, as from an offering and represents your *worship*. Now, what are a "**warp**" and a "**weft**"? Enquiring minds want to know. "**Warp**" or "**shethee**" (*shin-tav-yud*), in addition to the vertical strands in a woven fabric, also means "**drinking as wine**" or "**merriment**" (*an activity that makes you happy*). "**Weft**" or "**erev**" (*ayin-reish-vef*), in addition to being the horizontal strands in a woven fabric, also means "**mixed**", as in "**mixed people**". Remember the "**erev rav**" or the "**mixed multitude**" that came out of Mitzrayim along with B'nei Yisra'el. Now, what "**color**" would you like your "**nega**" (*plague*) to come in? "**Green**" represents *jealousy* or *covetousness* and "**red**" represents *passion* or *lust*. Both are symptomatic of "**lust of the eye**" and "**the pride of life**"; see **Yochanan Aleph / 1st John 2:15-17**.

Next in the Scriptures, we move into **Parsha Metzora** that speaks to the cleansing of the metzora (*the one who has tzara'at*). Let's look at **VaYiqra / Leviticus 14:1-3**; **And YHVH spoke to Moshe, saying, "This shall be the Torah of the metzora for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest, and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look and see, if the tzara'at is healed in the metzora,...."** The "**metzora**" is brought to the priest outside the camp, but not where the "**infected one**" had been living. Here, the priest inspects this person to see if indeed he/she is in fact healed. In his or her isolation, his diaspora or his being cut off from his people (*kind of like Northern Kingdom*); he reflects and thinks about his sin, his open mouth. If his heart is inclined toward YHVH, his family and his people, I imagine some serious "**teshuva**" takes place.

Here, I was reminded of something Sha'ul wrote in **Ibrim / Hebrews 12:5-13**; **And you have forgotten the appeal which speaks to you as to sons, "My son, do not despise the discipline of YHVH, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him, for whom YHVH loves, He disciplines, and flogs every son whom He receives." If you endure discipline, Elohim is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Moreover, we indeed had fathers of our flesh disciplining us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed disciplined us for a few days as seemed best to them, but He does it for our profit, so that we might share His holiness. And indeed, no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but grievous, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. So, strengthen the**

hands which hang down and the weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned aside, but instead, to be healed. Baruch HaShem YHVH! He is the El that heals me.

Let's continue with **VaYiqra / Leviticus 14:4-18**; "... then the priest shall command, and he shall take for him who is to be cleansed two live and clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command, and he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. Let him take the live bird and the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from tzara'at, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird loose in the open field. And he who is to be cleansed shall wash his garments, and shall shave off all his hair and wash himself in water, and shall be clean. Then after that he comes into the camp, but shall stay outside his tent seven days. And on the seventh day it shall be that he shaves all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shaves off. And he shall wash his garments and wash his body in water, and shall be clean. And on the eighth day he takes two male lambs, perfect ones, and one ewe lamb a year old, a perfect one, and three tenths of an Ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. And the priest who is cleansing shall present the man who is to be cleansed, with these offerings, before YHVH, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. And the priest shall take one male lamb and bring it as a guilt offering, and the log of oil, and wave them as a wave offering before YHVH. And he shall slaughter the lamb in the place where he slaughters the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a set-apart place. For the guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest. It is most set-apart. And the priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand. And 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 YHVH. And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest puts some on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the guilt offering. And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he puts on the head of him who is to be cleansed. And the priest shall make atonement for him before YHVH."

We need to cover a couple of things here. What about the *two birds*, the *cedar*, the *hyssop*, the *earthen vessel* and the *running water*? So, let's spend a few minutes and look at these. These *two birds* represent the "*two houses*" of Yisra'el. You see, one bird is slain (*the one from the House of Yehudah*). The other bird (*we'll call him Ephraim*) was spared, but covered by the blood of the one sacrificed. He was then set free in an open field; dispersed into the world, but covered by the blood. The first bird was slain in an earthen vessel (*a body*) over running water (*living water, or according to Torah*). He died so that His blood could cleanse the "*metzora*" (the one infected with sin and cast out of the camp of Yisra'el). What of the *cedar*, the *scarlet* and the *hyssop*? The "**cedar**" or "**erez**" in Hebrew (*aleph-reish-zayin*) is the perfect tree. That why it is referred to as the "**upright one**". Its roots are among the firmest and deepest in the ground, it's among the tallest and longest living of trees; and, its wood is without knots (*made perfect as Yahshua is perfect*). His blood and our "*teshuva*" make us as cedars. The numeric value of "**erez**" is 208, which equals "**v'ee qabats**" or "**and He gathered**" and "**ha ger**" or "**the stranger who sojourns**" and "**b' debar**" or "**through the word**". The "**scarlet**" or "**shawniy**" (*shin-nun-yud*) is the color that represents our sin. The numeric value of "**shawniy**" is 360 and equals "**n'ishi**" or "**my bride**" (plural) and "**b' mashiach**" or "**in Messiah**". I find it interesting that it comes from a worm. The "**hyssop**" or "**eyzowb**" (*aleph-zayin-vav-bet*) is a plant of

cleansing that has come to represent Yahshua's act of redemption. It was used to place the blood of the Pesach (*Passover lamb*) on the doorposts and lintels of the homes of B'nei Yisra'el in Mitzrayim, used to cleanse the Temple mount with the ashes of the Red Heifer and used to deliver sour wine to Yahshua's lips at his impaling. The numeric value of the letters in "**eyzowb**" is 16, which equals "**a'yadeh**" or "**I will praise**". All of these are connected to Mashiach. He is our "**cleansing**" offered for us by Abba YHVH, per His Covenant, Torah.

With the "**metzora**", having been healed and cleansed, he or she would shave all their hair, a sign of rebirth (*their skin being made as a baby's*), immerse themselves in the "**Mikveh**" and wash their garments and indeed be clean. Then there was another seven days of setting themselves apart. While living within the camp, they stayed outside their tent until this "**sanctification**" or "**setting apart**" was complete. If you'll notice, this seven day "**setting apart**" and the ritual of cleansing is much like that of the ordination of Aharon and his sons as priests. On the eighth day, they brought more offerings (more "**qorban**" or **drawing near** and "**olah**", **burnt offerings** or **ascension**) and became indeed renewed creations. And, at the close of the ritual for cleansing and after the offerings, the Priest anoints the head of the now cleansed "**metzora**" with oil as a sign of Ruach ha Kodesh is now imparted to him, as his new covering.

We see that Yahshua upheld these commands also, as He healed the "**metzora**" and taught His talmidim to do so as well. In one instance, we read in **Mattityahu / Matthew 8:1-4**; **And when He came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. And see, a metzora came, and bowed before Him, saying, "Master, if You desire, You are able to make me clean." And stretching out His hand Yahshua touched him, saying, "I desire it. Be cleansed!" And immediately his tzara'at was cleansed. And Yahshua said to him, "See, mention it to no one. But go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moshe commanded, as a witness to them."** While most English translations use the word "**leper**" and "**leprosy**" in this account; the Hebrew and Aramaic scrolls show "**metzora**" and "**tzara'at**" quite plainly. This coupled with presenting oneself to the priest, shows what is going on here.

YHVH's desire is that we seek to be made clean; and that takes a repentant heart and "**teshuva**", returning to the Elohim of our fathers. Yahshua already applied His blood, so that the Northern Kingdom can return to the Covenant with her Husband. But, His work is not yet done in us. If we want to be **cedars**, we have to plant ourselves by the "**Living Water**" (**Torah**). We must do as Sha'ul said and "**So, strengthen the hands which hang down and the weak knees, make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned aside, but instead, to be healed.**"

Baruch HaShem YHVH !