

## MORDEKAI'S DRASH — TAZRIA / M' TZORA



**Torah: Tazria (She conceives), Vayikra (Leviticus) 12.1-13.59**  
**along with: M'tzora (Infected one), Vayikra (Leviticus) 14.1-15.33**  
**Haftorah: Shmu'el Bet (2 Kings) 7.3-20**  
**Suggested Messianic Writings: Mattityahu (Matthew) 23.16-24.2, 30-31**

Shalom,

These are Torah portions that can present difficulty in a surface reading only. *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 12 is a short chapter on the laws of childbirth and purification; the next 3 chapters deal with skin diseases and infections. The preceding parashah dealt with clean and unclean animals; now we turn to clean and unclean things affecting people. One thing that can be misread and misunderstood from chapter 12 is that it is not childbirth that makes a woman ritually unclean, but rather it is the loss of blood from the childbirth, which is related to the menstrual cycle here. Throughout Torah, we are told that the life is in the blood; for example, blood is to be drained from meat before it is eaten. The loss of blood pictures death; touching death made one impure.

Becoming unclean and impure does not necessarily mean one is sinful. That is, a woman has not committed a sin by losing blood during childbirth, or by having a monthly flow of blood. Translation can cause confusion sometimes, for we read in this chapter that a woman is to bring a **חטאת** *khaht-taht*, normally translated a *sin* offering, in order to become *pure* again. One writer has suggested that a better understanding would be to call this a *purification* offering, which is indeed one of the meanings of **חטאת** *khaht-taht*. Another thought is this: As David declared in *Tehillim* (Psalms) 51 that he was born into sin, that is, from the moment we are born, the results of the fall from the Garden are a part of our nature. Our sin nature very easily produces uncleanness. Perhaps a mother had to bring a “sin offering” because she brought this new life into the fallen world. The basic premise is that what is called “unclean” could also be termed “common”. In other words, what is considered to be “common” is different and separate from what is “holy, set apart”. ADONI made a distinction between the two, and only what was “clean” and “holy” could come near His presence in the Tabernacle. It is of interest to note that the prescribed measures found in Vayikra 12 were followed by *Miriam v'Yosef* (Miriam/Mary and Joseph) when they presented the newborn Yeshua at the Temple (Luke 2.21-39).

We should probably point out here also that the distinction between clean and unclean still exists in our present-day world. *Sha'ul* (Saul/Paul) made this clear in his treatise in 2 Corinthians 6 regarding believers not being yoked together with unbelievers; righteousness and lawlessness cannot be partners.

In Mark 7, quoting from *Yeshu'yahu* (Isaiah), Yeshua said that worship was not real if it only consisted of lip-service and was not from the heart. Impure thoughts come at us all the time, and if we let our mind come into *contact* with them, that is, to invite them into the door of our heart, then we become unclean. In order to become clean, to become pure in ADONI's eyes, a sacrificial death was required; this is a mystery we will never fully understand in this life. Indeed, this is a paradox of ADONI, that one has to come into contact with “death” through blood in order to become “pure.” Thus we see the need for all the animal sacrifices for sin before He came, sacrifices which were only good for a season and which were pointing to The Sacrifice Lamb; thus the shed blood of our Messiah Yeshua, which is good for eternity. We need the blood of Yeshua “over the doorposts of our heart” to help us prevent the unclean from entering in.

Vayikra 13 deals with the issue of **צרעת** *tza-ra'at*, which is *not* leprosy as we know it today, nor should it have been translated that way, except that the translators could not describe it any other way. *Tza-ra'at* is basically a generic term for a variety of skin diseases that would have made a person ritually impure and unclean. The general belief among scholars now is that these diseases included *Psoriasis*, *Favus*, and *Leucoderma*. *Psoriasis* is a non-contagious flakiness of the skin; *Favus* is more serious, as it is a fungus that attacks hairy areas of the body, usually only the scalp, but is quite contagious. *Leucoderma* is a skin disease that causes the skin to lose its natural color and turn white. Many historians now believe, from a study of ancient Egyptian history and the examination of thousands of skeletons and mummies, that true leprosy was very rare, and possibly did not even exist on a vast scale in that region until around the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE (AD).

The general belief as taught by the Jewish Sages is that *tza-ra'at* was a punishment for such sins as bloodshed, false oaths, sexual immorality, pride, robbery, selfishness and forbidden speech. These behaviors are anti-social, and therefore the punishment was banishment from society, with the idea that one could become healed through repentance. That is why, when someone *was healed*, they had to present themselves

to a *Kohen* (Priest). The primary sin, the Sages taught, was that of **לשון הרע** *lashon hara*, forbidden speech. *Lashon hara* occurs when someone is talking evil about another, or using words to destroy a person's reputation. Many of the Sages regarded *lashon hara* as equal to, or even greater than, the sin of murder, in that it can kill a person's soul.

It is a medical fact that anger, unforgiveness and bitterness can put the body into a stressful situation, which can then reveal itself physically through one malady or another. ADONI gave the remedy: love people, love G-d. This is not to say that all disease is brought on in this manner, nor that all who have a disease are undergoing judgment. But even if they are, it is intended solely as a conversation between them and ADONI, and should not come under the scrutinizing accusations of anyone else! There is a fine line between discernment and judgment, and all too often the line is crossed unnecessarily and too quickly.

In the Messianic Writings this week, from Matthew, Yeshua strongly chastises certain hypocritical religious leaders of the day. Because the term "Pharisee" has become a term indicating a dishonest person, it is not generally understood that not all Pharisees were that way. David Stern explains this in great detail in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*; I would recommend that all who are interested in the Hebraic roots of our faith purchase this book, along with Stern's *Complete Jewish Bible*. (One bit of evidence of a righteous Pharisee is found in Acts 23.6, where Sha'ul (Saul, also known as Paul) said "I am a Pharisee," long after he was a believer and follower of Yeshua. In the same vein of thought, there are certainly dishonest "preachers" or "evangelists" today, but that does not mean that all preachers and evangelists are dishonest.) The point here is how very wrong it is to serve HASHEM deceitfully and outwardly only, when the inside is "full of robbery and self-indulgence" (Matt 23.25); "full of dead people's bones and all kinds of rottenness" (vs 27); "full of hypocrisy and far from Torah" (28).

Sha'ul has a commentary of sorts concerning the subject of righteous living and *lashon hara*, in 2 Timothy 2, which we won't go into here; you might want to take a couple of minutes sometime and read the chapter. I will close with a good piece of advice from the chapter (2.22): "along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart, pursue righteousness, faithfulness, love and peace."

**שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם** – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

**B'rakhot v'todah rabbah**  
(Blessings & thank you very much)

### **Mordekhi**

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.  
(Acts 1.11 CJB)