

## Parashat Metzora- The Hidden Connection



**Torah: Vayiqra [Leviticus] 14:1- 15:33, Haftarah: Melakim Beyth [2 Kings] 7:3-20, Netzarim Ketuvim: MattithYahu [Matthew] 8:1-4**

### Introduction:

Our Torah reading for this week concerns the healing of a Leper so it is the process and concept of this healing and how that might be linked to the **Pesach** [Passover] and how it may also be linked to **Messiah** that I hope to discover.



Last week our reading revolved around how one might become unclean & thereby be unable to come before **YHWH** in the **Mishkan** [the Tabernacle]. In our former reading we dealt with all the scenarios of **Tzara'at** often translated as Leprosy though it is recognized in the commentaries as more of a skin condition caused by a spiritual problem. It is

with these thoughts that we will look at the healing of **Tzara'at [Leprosy]**.

### Summary of Our Torah Reading:

1. This portion deals the process of purification after the Kohen [the Priest] determines that healing has occurred for the leprose skin condition.
2. On completion of the process the Kohen [the Priest] makes offerings as prescribed.
3. Details relating to a poor person with the offerings of two birds are explained.
4. The home is also quarantined for up to 3 weeks before being declared clean.
5. Other forms of impurity are now discussed plus the use of a Mikvah [a ritual pool] for cleansing.

### Understanding Tzara'at:

There is much discussion that suggests that this disease is not biological. We are aware that it is some sort of white discolouration of the skin & of the hairs. However, the treatment is not medical but spiritual. The treatment to us today seems bizarre.



There are two birds, a piece of Cedar wood, a scarlet thread & a hyssop plant. All that sounds much like a scene of a witches' cauldron in Macbeth.



It is suggested that it derives from sins like speaking Lashon Hara which is some form of gossip or slander or a deep lack of humility. Where then does this idea originate from?

We do see this played out with Miryam in **Bemidbar [Numbers] 12** where Miryam & Aharon spoke out against Mosheh over his Kushite [Ethiopian] woman. We then read this in:



**Bemidbar [Numbers] 12:9-10** So the anger of YHWH burned against them & He departed.  
**10** And when the cloud had withdrawn from the tent Miryam was leprous as snow.

We do then read again concerning **King UzziYahu [Uzziah]** in 2 Chronicles 26:16-23 when in his pride He desired to burn incense before YHWH which only the sons of Aharon the Priests were commissioned to perform.



The Priests therefore urged him emphatically to depart from the House of YHWH but when he refused, we read this in:



**Beyth Dibre Hayammiym [2 Chronicles] 26:19** And UzziYahu was enraged, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, and while he was enraged with the Kohaniym [the Priests], leprosy broke out on his forehead before the

**Priests in the house of YHWH, from beside the Altar of Incense.**

From these examples we can understand that **Tzara'at** may be more than a biological disease & can relate to numerous conditions such as Leprosy, ring worms, Psoriasis, impetigo and tropical sores. Our previous Torah portion gave us many scenarios relating to these so a better translation might be a **“scaly affliction.”** However, we read that this affliction would also affect garments and houses so the afflicted was driven from the camp to prevent affecting others so it may have origins in a Spiritual Malady like evil speech, slander or gossip which then transgressed into a biological ailment causing isolation.

### The Connection of Tzara'at with Pesach [Passover]:



As we approach Pesach, we have this unique connection that begins with the Hebrew word **“nega”** which means a plague & is used when one contracts Tzara'at but is only used one other time in the Torah and that is the plague of the killing of the 1<sup>st</sup> born. Now we turn to the healing process to see how it may relate to one with **Tara'at [leprosy]**.

Firstly, one bird is killed with the other sent out into the field. With the 10<sup>th</sup> plague the 1<sup>st</sup> born of **Mitsrayim** [Egypt] died & Yisrael the 1<sup>st</sup> born of YHWH were sent out into the wilderness. What then happens to the dead bird?



Its blood is mixed into the water symbolic of the 1<sup>st</sup> plague when the Nile turned to blood.

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Next, we have a piece of **Cedar wood** that gets dipped in blood with the “**ezov**” or the **hyssop plant** just as they dipped it in Mitsrayim [Egypt] & painted the doorposts.



Then there is a 7-day waiting period for the **Metzora** the infected one while after the Pesach offering, we find the 7 days of removal of **Chametz** [leaven] during the Feast of Unleavened bread.

It is almost as if the Metzora offering is a **mini-Korban Pesach** [Passover offering].



The sage **Ramban** & **Nahmanides** the famous Medieval commentator reveals this thought. Therefore, why would the process of purification model that of Pesach [Passover].

Surely it concerns the journey out of a place of bondage into a place of freedom & purification. Surely that is not only in the clearly physical but also that of the Spiritual both for the **Yisraelites** coming out of Mitsrayim but also of the one afflicted with **Leprosy** or **Tzara'at**.

### Our Glorious Connection:

With the coming of our Master Yeshua into the World we hopefully will see just how relevant this reading is for us today. By the 1st Century the faith of Yisrael had developed a list of major signs the true **Mashiach** (Messiah) could be expected to give as proof of his identity. We see that question raised by **Yahuchanan** (John) the immerser when he sends his Talmidim [Disciples] to Yeshua who says in:



**MattithYahu [Matthew] 11:4-5** “Go report to Yahuchanan [John] the things which you have heard and the things you have seen.” “The blind receives sight & the lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor are brought the Good News.”

I hope we can see even in this context a very spiritual truth which I hope we can catch from the purification ritual of the one with **Tzara'at**.

We are surely aware that sin is a form of Leprosy & though we must have grace towards the faults of others there is instructions of separation for those who persist in sin though anyone who truly repents can be cleansed through the **blood of Yeshua**.

I hope we can see the connection with the healing & purification process of the Leper then, since with the two birds one who dies while the other is dipped in its blood & set free so the implication is that Yeshua died with the sinner being set free & the cedar wood dipped in blood must relate to the Cross of Messiah the door through which the faithful must pass as the Yisraelites did in Mitsrayim after the Pesach offering.



### The Final Words:

May we never fail to see the **Spiritual** truth found in the physical processes of the Torah which were surely ahead of their time in preventing a serious biological epidemic. This was so clearly identified by quarantining the afflicted but also by burning clothes & property affected something nowadays that is common practice. However, that same process can so readily be applied to aspects of sin too. Both in a personal level & that of the believer's community in order to purify the individual & sustain the community of Yahweh from being defiled. By so doing we maintain the words of **Shaul [Paul]** who declares in:



**Ephesian 5:27** that Yeshua might present her to Himself a glorious Assembly, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

**Amein!**

**Haftarah: Melakim Beyth [2 Kings] 7:3-20**



Our reading details a hard time for Yerushalayim when the Syrian army of Ben Hadad lay siege to it. The time was so bad that people began to eat their children & the King wanted the head of Elisha and so much sin had risen but there were these four men who had been cast out of the gate since they had contracted **Tzara'at [Leprosy]**.



These men sat waiting for death but then thought to go to the camp of the Syrians & found it deserted because YHWH had caused the army to hear the noise of another great army. These men feared **divine punishment** for not telling the King rather than fearing the return of this army.



An officer who said the Prophet's word would be impossible was then trampled by the people fulfilling the words of **the Navi** [the Prophet] who said he would see it but not taste it. It was surely a time of great defilement among the people of Yisrael through exceeding starvation, but YHWH was faithful & compassionate to restore **Yerushalayim** & its people in a truly miraculous way that they may return to Him in repentance.

Netzarim Ketuvim: MattithYahu [Matthew] 8:1-4

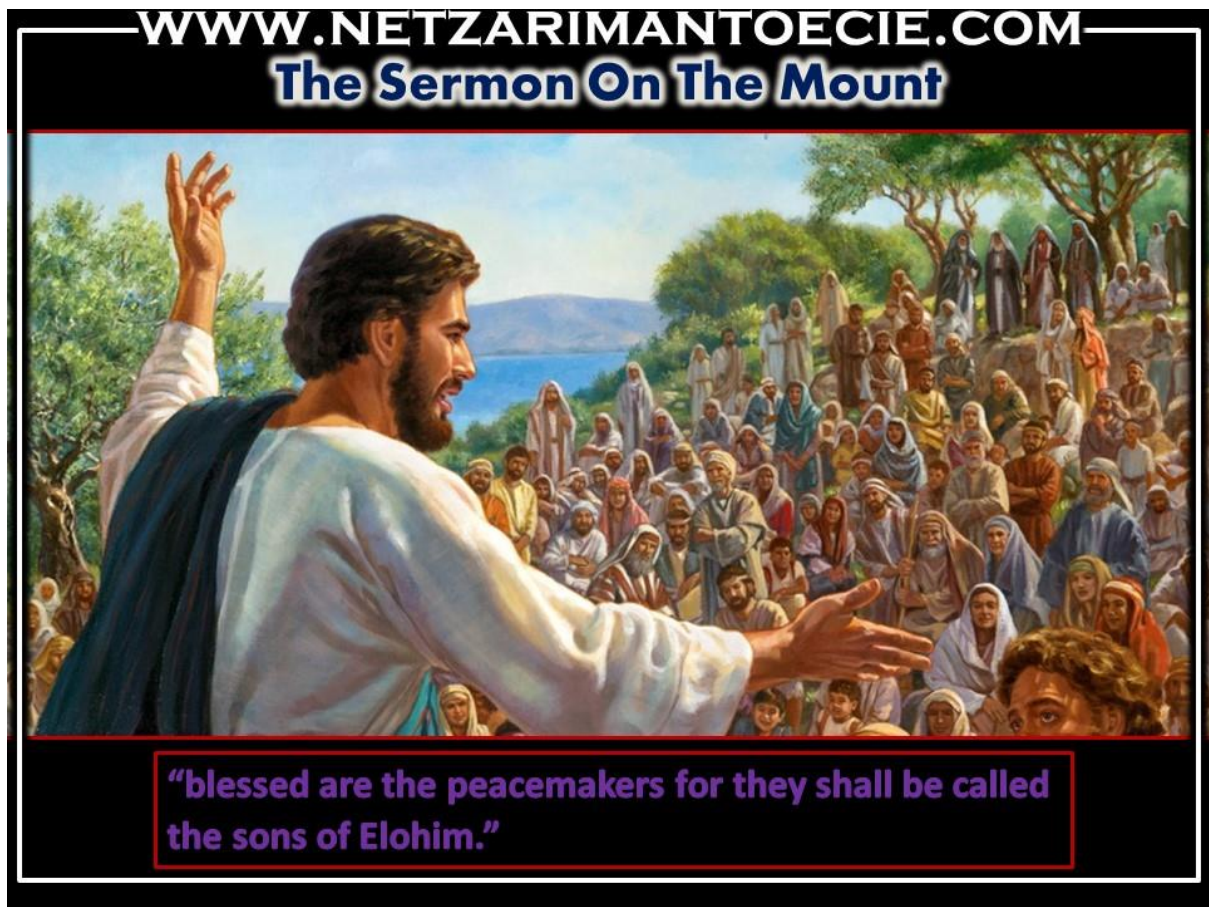


In Yeshua's day there were those who suffered with **Tzara'at** known today as Leprosy for which, like the woman with the issue of blood caused them to be cast out of the Community and they would have to call out **unclean, unclean** which must have been so demoralizing & then they had to dwell outside the village away from family or the community and especially away from the Temple being thought where the presence of the Holy Elohim was according to Torah. I can imagine when he came up the hill to meet Yeshua and he cast off his cloak revealing his affliction that the multitude as well as the disciples all drew back in exceeding fear. I can picture the scene with only Yeshua not drawing back and then doing a most remarkable act in the eyes of all the people as they watched in disgust. Yeshua knowing that the leper was defiled & contagious did a most gracious act, even before he spoke a word. He put his hand on him, the one thing the leper had craved, for so long since he was prohibited from touching even his children or his wife as we saw with the woman with the flow of blood. The compassion of the Master truly shows us how Yeshua being the word of Elohim in the flesh so graciously lowered himself to become so defiled for our sake since we read this in:

**Corintyah Beyth [2 Corinthians] 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of Elohim in Him.**

I truly hope we can all learn from the love and compassion that our Master clearly revealed with all His dealings with people whom their world had ostracised and considered as defiled and an outcast of the Community. This extends to all the gross sinners like the tax collectors

that Yeshua came to touch. May we show that compassion to a world that hungers for compassion & love. This is why Yeshua declares in the sermon on the mount:



**"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of Elohim."**

**Amein! Shavua Tov Aleychem [a good week unto you].**