

Parashat Metzora

פרשת מצרע

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Tsaraat (skin disease) and our need for a Savior.

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Leviticus 14:1-15:33

הפטרה: 2Kings 7:3-20

הברית: Luke 12-13

החדשה

Triennial cycle: Vayikra / Leviticus 14:1-32

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In the law of Tsaraat (Skin Disease) there are two sets of cleansing requirements, the first set is for the person who has the finances to purchase the required Korbanot (Sacrifices) for his cleansing and purification services. The second set is for the poor person who cannot afford to purchase what is required for his cleansing and purification. What is interesting is that cleansing and purification can occur having differences in the required Korbanot. This indicates for us the important differences between what is known as the letter of the law and the spirit of the law when a person is to come before the Lord. The letter of the law versus the spirit of the law is an idiomatic antithesis. When one obeys the letter of the law but not the spirit, one is obeying the literal interpretation of the words (the "letter"), but not the intent of those who wrote the law. What can we learn from the intent of the Torah Mitzvah (command) here on the letter verses the spirit? Now the disease of Tsaraat with respect to leprosy was generally a lifelong disease, or at least one that lasted a very long time before healing came. If a person were to have had Tsaraat for a long period of time, would he have had sufficient means (money) to purchase either one of these required Korbanot? Who would pay the cost? Would his family or a friend help out? Being stricken with Tsaraat one is not allowed to participate in the community. He or She is forced to remain outside and alone. Even though the Khatat and Olah (sin and burnt) offerings using pigeons or turtledoves were not very expensive the one with Tsaraat was required to buy them. Does this mitzvah suggest the need for a kinsman redeemer?

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ויקרא 13:1-3

21 וְאִם-יִדְּבַל הוּא וְאֵין יָדוֹ מִשְׁנֵת וְלָקַח
כֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד אֲשֶׁם לְתַנּוּפָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו וְעִשְׂרוֹן סֹלֶת
22 אֶחָד בְּלוּל בְּשֶׁמֶן לְמִנְחָה וְלֶגַע שֶׁמֶן: וּשְׁתֵּי תֹרִים אֵין
שְׁנֵי בְּנֵי יוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיֵג יָדוֹ וְדִיהָ אֶחָד חֲטָאתָ וְהָאֶחָד
23 עֹלָה: וְהֵבִיא אֹתָם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְטַהֲרָתוֹ אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן

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Vayikra / Leviticus 14:21

14:21 'But if he is poor and his means are insufficient, then he is to take one male lamb for a guilt offering as a wave offering to make atonement for him, and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and a log of oil, 14:22 and two turtledoves or two young pigeons which are within his means, the one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. (NASB)

40 According to the Scriptures, for one who could not afford all these Korbanot (offerings), two pigeons or two turtledoves could be substituted for one of the male lambs and the female lamb. The amount of choice flour would be reduced to one-tenth ephah (over two dry quarts). Then the procedure that followed would remain the same. (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 14:21-31*) The scriptures do not indicate that the "nearest kinsman" would help with the Korbanot.

45 Tsaraat (skin diseases) is described in the Bible as referring to a bodily disease that appears on the skin that is directly connected to a spiritual malaise, a punishment that was designed to show a malefactor (someone who has committed a crime) that he must repent and change his ways. The biblical treatment of this was for the person to be placed in complete isolation outside the camp. This was a form of social and economic isolation. The putting out of the community enabled the person to spend time alone and repent of their sins before God. It is believed that the outward Tsaraat was the skin disease, and the inward disease was sin, particularly anti-social sins, lying for selfish ends, sexual immorality, false oaths, pride, and especially lashon hara (slander). Yeshua believed that these things make a man unclean according to what he said in *Matthew 15:18-20*:

55 **KATA MATΘAION 15:18-20**

18 τὰ δὲ ἐκπορευόμενα ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ἐκ τῆς καρδίας ἐξέρχεται
19 κάκεῖνα κοῖνοὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον * ἐκ γὰρ τῆς καρδίας ἐξέρχονται
20 διαλογισμοὶ πονηροὶ φόνοι μοιχεῖαι πορνεῖαι κλοπαὶ ψευδο-
21 μαρτυρίαι βλασφημίαι * ταῦτά ἐστιν τὰ κοινούντα τὸν ἄνθρω-
πον τὸ δὲ ἀνίπτους χερσὶν φαγεῖν οὐ κοῖνοὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον * καὶ

60 The word used here by Yeshua is "*koinoi*" meaning "to make (ceremonially) unclean, impure; to defile." This interpretation by Yeshua is supported in *Bamidbar / Numbers 12*, Moshe's sister Miriam was afflicted with Tsaraat because of her slandering Moshe about his Cushite wife. Miriam said "*Has the Lord spoken only through Moshe?*" and the Lord heard this and struck her with the skin disease. Being found with Tsaraat, can you imagine what it would have been like to be placed outside of the community and to have to cry out "*unclean, unclean?*" Have you ever felt unworthy, unworthy of God and others? The Torah mitzvah of Tsaraat provides for us a picture of our own unworthiness because of sin in our lives. Being born in sin, we are separated from God and His family. It is for this reason that we find ourselves in the same situation as that of a person stricken with Tsaraat and therefore we need someone to buy or purchase the Korbanot required for our cleansing and purification before God. Essentially, we need a kinsman redeemer.

75 It was for this reason that Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah (Christ) had come into the world, not to condemn the world but to save and to wash away our sins (see *Ivrit / Hebrews 13:11-12*). The Cohen hagadol (high priest) carried the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies were burned outside of the camp. So Yeshua also suffered outside the city gate to make us holy through his own blood. Yeshua suffered, enduring the terrible disgrace outside of the city gate for you and for me. Yeshua died to restore you and me, to

Matthew 15:18-20

15:18 'But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 15:19 'For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 15:20 'These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.' (NASB)

80 make us clean again. The letter of the law would require us to perform these
sacrifices to become ritually clean but the true purpose of the law, the true
meaning, the spirit of Torah was that Yeshua would suffer and pay for our sins
upon the cross. *Yeshaya / Isaiah 53:5 "He was pierced for our transgressions, he
was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon
him, and by his wounds we are healed."* In the mitzvah of Tsaraat, the poor who
85 could not afford the cost of purchasing the required Korbanot were to bring
something of lesser financial value. The important point was for the person who
had been healed to recognize and acknowledge that healing came by a miracle of
God and this was illustrated in the ritual for the bringing of the person back into
fellowship with God and His community of believers. The critical events here are
90 the spiritual restoration of the child of God. The Lord was not simply healing but
bringing the person back into a relationship with Him. If you are performing the
mitzvot by the letter and have not incorporated the spirit of the Torah in Yeshua
the Messiah you need a spiritual restoration, a renewing of your heart, mind, and
soul. Let us pray.

95 Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your Holy Word. Thank You for drawing me near to You
and leading me in Your ways and paths of righteousness. I believe that You sent
100 Your Son Yeshua as my Redeemer and Savior. I want a spiritual restoration,
please have mercy upon me and forgive me of my sins in Yeshua's Name.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Create in me a new heart, renew me, and
make me a new person. I love You Lord. I want to worship and serve You in
purity of heart and spirit. Help me to be everything that You would have me to
105 be. I give You all of the glory, the honor, and the praise. In Yeshua's Name I
pray.

Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever