

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation
(Under same management for over 5785 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

May 5th, 10:30 AM Lolo Community Synagogue
12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Study



"Blessed are those whose way of life is blameless; who live by the Torah of Adonai.
Blessed are those who observe His instruction; who seek Him with all their heart." Psalm 119





Tazria Leviticus 12:1- 3

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:

Vay'daber Adonai el-Moshe lemor.

And the Lord spoke to Moses saying,

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִשָּׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וַיֵּלֶדָה זָכָר וְטָמְאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים

**Daber el-benei Yisra'el lemor, isah ki
tazria v'yaldah zachar v'tam'ah shiv'at yamim**

"Speak to the sons of Israel saying, 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days,

כִּי־יָמֵי זָרָת הִזְתָּה תִטְמָא: וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִמּוֹל בֶּשֶׂר עֶרְלָתוֹ:

kimey nidat devotah tit'ma. Uvayom hashmini yimol besar orlato.

as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean.

And on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised."

Haftarah: Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you; and I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

Psalms 127:3-5

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!

B'rit Hadashah: John 16:21

A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.



Metzora Leviticus 14:1-3

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: זֹאת תִּהְיֶה תוֹרַת הַמְצֻרָע

Vay'daber Adonai el-Moshe lemor. Zot tih'yeh torat ha-m'tsora

And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, "This shall be the law of the leper

בְּיוֹם טְהוֹרָתוֹ וְהוּבָא אֵל-הַכֹּהֵן: וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה

b'yom tahorato v'hoova el-ha-kohen. V'yatsa ha-kohen el-michuts lamachaneh

in the day of his cleansing. And he shall be brought to the priest; & the priest shall go outside the camp

וַרְאֵה הַכֹּהֵן וְהָיָה נִרְפָּא נֶגַע הַצִּרְעָת מִן-הַצְּרוּעַ:

v'ra'ah ha-kohen v'hineh nirpa nega ha-tsara'at min-ha-tsaru'a.

and the priest shall look, (to examine if) the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper.

Haftarah: 2nd Kings 5:1,9-10,14-15

Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master and highly respected because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, **but he was a leper**. And he brought a letter to the king of Israel saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you that you may cure him of his leprosy."

So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots, and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel..."

Psalm 51:7

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

B'rit Hadashah: Luke 7:19, 21-23

...Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord saying, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?"

At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and He granted sight to many who were blind.

And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk; the **lepers are cleansed**, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me."

God's Gospel Message, Calling His People to be a Distinct People

We tend to think of God's gospel message originating with the **B'rit Hadashah** because the Church has given us this idea. However, **God has always wanted humankind to worship Him**. God's people (both Jews & Gentiles) are called by Him **to be a distinct people, a separate people (sanctified), and a holy people**. People groups should be able to see some things about our lives that are different from theirs. They should see that we separate ourselves from things that they intuitively know are "impure." They should be able to see in our everyday living that our desire is to be holy because our God is holy. God's desire for His people to live holy, distinct lives as a witness to other people groups originated with God's call to Abram and His commands to His people, Israel: "By those who come near Me, I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored"....."and so to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean,...." (**Leviticus 10:3,10**). Originally it was **Israel that proclaimed the first gospel message to other people groups by living distinct, separate, and holy lives in obedience to God's commands**. One might even look back to **God's call to Abram in Genesis 12 to separate himself from his people and follow God's direction toward "parts unknown."** It has always been God's desire to call to Himself a people who would worship Him alone and be the conduit through which other peoples could join themselves to Him.

God's method of illustrating for His people His desire for them to be His own distinct and holy people was through prescribed ceremonial ritual, which **served as a picture of Man's "pure" or "impure" state**. Only those who were ritually pure ("**tahor**") could approach their holy God in worship. However, there was always a provision made for those who were "impure" ("**tamei**") to be restored to "purity," if they would obey God's rules, administered by the Levites. We have already seen that animals used for sacrifice had to be "without blemish." Also those who brought the sacrifice had to be "whole" ("**tam**"). No person "contaminated" ("**tum'ah**") or "impure" ("**tamei**") could approach God. **There was/is only one way to worship God....God's way!** The Levites only allowed those who were "whole," and "pure" to bring their sacrifices **in faith, belief, and in obedience** to God's commands. God's sacrificial law was a foreshadow of the future sacrifice of Messiah. Today **all who apprehend (take into one's self) the sacrifice of Messiah, Yeshua, in faith, belief, and in obedience to God's commands are made**

perfect and sanctified in God's sight. God forgives their sins and lawless deeds and no longer remembers them (Hebrews 10:1,10).

The Impurity of childbirth - Leviticus, Chapter 12

After the birth of a child, there was a period of time in which the mother is "tamei," ritually unclean. This carried the meaning that the mother is in a condition that prevents her from entering into the Tabernacle or Temple. She is not allowed to enter into congregational life. After the prescribed time, she must bring a sin offering to the priest to make atonement, as a public picture that she has been cleansed of her impurity. Since **Genesis 1:28** commands God's people to be "fruitful and multiply," there is no sin in childbirth. However, **the natural oozing of bodily fluids that results after childbirth, renders the woman "tamei,"** according to the ritual. **The picture given is that no "impure" person can enter into congregational life to have a personal relationship with the Holy God of Israel.** Understanding this picture of our relationship with God allows each of us to re-examine our own lives; to repent, when we are convicted that we have sinned against God; to ask forgiveness both from God and from those we may have offended, when we are led by the **Ruach** (Spirit) to do so.

There has been much Rabbinic discussion as to why the period of "tamei" is twice as long after the birth of a girl than after the birth of a boy. Our knowledge of procreation and delivery has greatly increased since much of the Rabbinic commentary of the middle ages was given. Rabbinic pronouncements of theology based upon a poor understanding of procreation science have resulted in the misapplication of Rabbinic law that effects women even today. This Shabbat we will discuss some of these Rabbinic commentaries relating to why the mother of a baby girl is "unclean" twice as long as she would be after the birth of a baby boy. I have spoken with an Orthodox Rabbi from Boro Park, New York (a very Orthodox area), who admitted that he did not have a good understanding of these matters, citing different, conflicting rulings from several Rabbinic sources. After the prescribed time, the woman would immerse herself in a ritual bath (mikveh) and be considered ritually clean, but my orthodox Rabbi friend could not answer why the woman's period of "uncleanness" was twice as long after the birth of a girl, as opposed to the birth of a boy. His incite to me was that in practice in the US, it is considered a "bother" that a woman in menstruation or having recently given birth would attend services. It is generally recommended that she remain home. However, there is no public declaration by a **Kohen** (descendant of Aaron) that the woman is "unclean." After the woman no longer has any discharge, she enters the mikvah and then is ready to return to the congregation.

The Impurity of **Tsara'at - Leviticus, Chapters 13 & 14**

"**Tsara'at**" is a spreading skin disease or infection of the surface of the skin that can result in the oozing of bodily fluids. It has been misinterpreted in the past **as Leprosy** (Hansen's Disease) and even translated as "Leprosy" in today's Bibles. However, the meaning of "**tsara'at**" comes from a root that means a "mark or a stroke." It is considered a "**nig'ei**," a plague on the skin. The connotation of the word is indicative of the rough, scaly, flakey, or encrusted appearance of the skin. It could also

include macular (a discolored stain or spot or thickening of the surface of the skin), papular (a small, circumscribed, superficial elevation of the skin), or vesicular (small, circumscribed blister-like elevations of the skin containing a serous fluid) eruptions of the skin. There are many dermatologic conditions that could be called "**tsara'at**." Psoriasis, eczema, leucoderma, vitiligo, candidiasis (thrush), chicken pox, ringworm, scabies, some sexually transmitted diseases, and any infection that produced a rash could be classified by the priests as "**tsara'at**." Any raw flesh, resulting from burns or even poor wound care, boils, and skin infections in the hair or beard could render the person "**tamei**," **ritually unclean**. Even garments or the stones of a house could become contaminated, "**tum'ah**," by mold or mildew and be considered "**nig'ei habayit**," a house plague. In **Leviticus**, Chapter **14:33-53**, "house leprosy" is indicated only "when you enter the land of Canaan." Therefore, one might think that only houses can become contaminated with "plague" within the land of Israel. My Orthodox Rabbi friend says that there is no **Gemara** (Jewish commentary) on this subject, and therefore the declaration of a house as "unclean" is not practiced in the US or in Israel today.

One of the biblically prescribed jobs of the Levites was to observe and diagnose (not medically treat) any person, garment, or home having one of these conditions. The infected person must allow inspection by the Levites. If the condition worsened or spread, the priest was to pronounce them "unclean," which they would remain for the rest of their lives, unless miraculously cured. Later, however, if the condition healed or resolved (a different condition than "leprosy" that resolved on its own), the Levite would pronounce the person "**tahor**," ritually clean. Some garments would be scrubbed or might have to be destroyed, and some stones would have to be removed from the house, or the whole stone house dismantled, if the priest thought the mold or mildew was spreading.

In Biblical times, the person with a spreading skin infection was isolated from the camp. He had to **loosen his hair (a sign of mourning)**, since he was considered as dead, **tear part of his clothes, cover his mustache, and cry out "unclean, unclean"** so as to avoid contact with others. Today, physicians would treat these bacterial infections but might also isolate the infected person for a time. We have also found that mold and mildew can spread airborne illness necessitating its removal from homes and air conditioning ducts. **Viruses such as the Covid19 virus can be highly contagious**, especially to the elderly or others with weak immune systems, **requiring quarantine to inhibit spread**. In Biblical times, it would have been considered a miracle for an individual with "leprosy" to be cured, which is why Yeshua, after curing a leper who came to Him in faith for healing, told the man to go show his cleansing to the priest as a testimony and as prescribed by the law. "Lepers" were kept apart from the people of God. They were not able to offer sacrifices to God or to enter into community activities. They were considered as "dead men walking" because in those days without a miracle of God, there was no cure.



Speak no Evil, See no Evil, Hear no Evil

The Typology of **Tsara'at**

In ancient Rabbinic thought, **tsara'at** was caused by slander (**lashon hara**), bloodshed, false oaths, or immorality. Obviously, bloodshed (wound infection) and immorality (the vesicles or warts of sexually transmitted diseases) could produce a spreading skin infection. But how about **slander and false oaths**? This Shabbat, we'll look at Rabbinic thought in this area. Because it was thought that "leprosy" was the result of sin, there have been discussions on the **parallels between "leprosy" and sin**. Both are: 1) **"in the blood"** 2) **loathsome**...offending in loathsome ways. 3) **begin in a small way** 4) **spread**, if it is not stopped 5) **produce sores and marks** 6) **are not curable** by human means 7) **would be fatal if not stopped** 8) **kill slowly** 9) **separate the person from God**.

Thought Question: How can we today avoid **Lashon hara**?

First, we must **develop habits to negate evil speaking**. One habit might be that **when we are tempted to verbally retort, we just keep silent**. Keeping silent is not an easily accomplished, when one is in the habit of responding in like kind, when there is a perceived insult or feeling of being made to feel inferior. **Keeping silent** is a trait that must be learned through practice, practice, practice. Even when we have learned to keep silent most of the time, when we feel we have been offended, silence is not today considered a positive trait. While silence might negate **evil speaking** (**lashon hara**), it does little to make for positive feelings for anyone.

Secondly, **we must learn to return good words to replace evil words**: **Lashon tov** (good speech) to replace **lashon hara**. Replying positively to someone who is trying to denigrate you is more difficult than just keeping silent but **finding a way to be positive in reply has the possibility of healing** for both people. How can we first learn to be silent when verbally confronted, and then to reply positively? One way might be to **remember our position in lieu of what God has done for us through Messiah, while we are totally undeserving**. What is then our responsibility **to return good speech for evil speech, reflecting God's graciousness to us**? **After practice of only speaking lashon tov**, we will learn to extinguish even hearing **lashon hara**, as it applies to us. The same mechanism can be applied to seeing evil.... The concept of learning **Gam zu l'tova**, "This too is for the good!" But that's a topic for another interactive forum.



God's Provision of Cleansing from "Leprosy"

In this Torah portion, we also will find God's provision for cleansing from "leprosy." God always gives us hope. He always makes provision for our being returned "**tahor**," clean into His presence. No matter what is your own personal "leprosy," God has made provision to return you to wholeness and to relationship with Him. As was said above, **each individual must apprehend (take grasp of) God's provision for restoration.** Anyone (Jew or Gentile) who apprehends the sacrifice of Messiah, Yeshua, in faith, belief, and in obedience to God's commands **is made perfect and sanctified** in God's sight. God forgives their sins and lawless deeds and no longer remembers them (**Hebrews 10:1,10**). **When the Judge of the universe, looks at each of us, will He find us acceptable, according to His standards, or will he see us as "unclean," separate and apart from Him?**

SHABBAT SHALOM

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord! Deuteronomy 6:5

*"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your
strength!*

And you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Mark 12:29

*With all our **kavanah**: our sincere intention, focus, and devotion.
Our love for **Hashem** must permeate every aspect of our physical,
intellectual, and emotional expression.*



**Commemorating the Israeli Declaration of Independence on 14 May
1948.**