



*“AGAIN, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MERCHANT IN SEARCH OF FINE PEARLS,
46 AND UPON FINDING A SINGLE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE,
HE WENT AND SOLD ALL THAT HE HAD AND BOUGHT IT.
MATTHEW 13:45*

2nd April 2022

1 Nissan 5782

Tazria - ‘She Conceives’

Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Eze 45:16-38 Jn 11:47-56

It won't belong before we reach the feast of Passover or Pesach. Our parsha last week taught us about the process of consecration for the priests. For a period of seven days the priests were to consecrate themselves to the Lord before offering the first sacrifices to YHVH on the eighth day.

In Parsha Tazria we read:

12 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **2** “Speak to the children of Israel, saying,

‘If a woman conceives and gives birth to a male child, she shall be [ceremonially] unclean for seven days, unclean as during her monthly period. **3** On the eighth day the flesh of the male child's foreskin shall be circumcised. **4** Then she shall remain [intimately separated] thirty-three days to be purified from the blood; she shall not touch any consecrated thing nor enter the [courtyard of the] sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. **5** But if she gives birth to a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as during her monthly period, and she shall remain [intimately separated] sixty-six days to be purified from the blood.’ AMP

The birth of the male child required seven days of purification before offering the child as a first fruit to the Lord. The process required the shedding of blood through the Brit Milah cut.

The word ‘Brit means ‘Covenant’ and the word ‘Milah’ means circumcision. Although the detail is in Leviticus 12, the first mention of circumcision is by YHVH to Abraham in Genesis 17:7. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when it was commanded to him.

Genesis 17:7, “And I will establish My covenant between Me and between you and between your seed after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be to you for a God and to your seed after you.”

In Leviticus 12 we read : “On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.” The idea or symbology of circumcision extends beyond the literal aspect of the cutting of the foreskin but represents a condition in which a separation occurs.

Through a little study, I came across an ancient semitic word ‘Mulal’. It denotes such an aspect and it may be considered that the word Mulal, Milah and Mohel, (the person who performs the circumcision) are related. Mulal, refers to God speaking directly to our hearts. Thus we can understand that the act of circumcising our hearts is allowing God to directly speak and change the condition of our hearts toward Him.

Circumcision also reveals the image of YHVH surrounding or encircling us. We can see this aspect unravel as Joshua, having led the people into Gilgal and positioned the twelve stones, has all the men circumcised.

Joshua 5

2 It was at that time that *Adonai* said to Y’hoshua, “Make yourself knives of flint, and circumcise the people of Isra’el again, a second time. 3 So Y’hoshua made himself knives of flint and circumcised the people of Isra’el at Giv’at-Ha’Aralot [the hill of foreskins]. 4 The reason Y’hoshua circumcised was that all the people who had left Egypt who were males, all the fighting men, had died in the desert along the way after leaving Egypt. 5 For although all the people who left Egypt had been circumcised, all those who had been born in the desert on the way as they went on from Egypt had not been circumcised; 6 because the people of Isra’el walked forty years in the desert until the whole nation, that is, the fighting men who had left Egypt, had died out; because they had not heeded what *Adonai* said. *Adonai* had sworn that he would not allow them to see the land which *Adonai* swore to their ancestors that he would give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 So he raised up their children to take their place, and it was these whom Y’hoshua circumcised; till then they had been uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised while traveling.CJB

Now that the people have crossed the Jordan and a new generation circumcised, things would change. The people now in a new land will have to fend for themselves. The Lord will no longer be providing the manna for them.

V8 When all the nation had been circumcised, every one of them, they stayed where they were in camp until they had healed. 9 *Adonai* said to Y’hoshua, “Today I have rolled off from you the stigma of Egypt.” This is why the place has been called Gilgal [rolling] ever since. 10 The people of Isra’el camped at Gilgal, and they observed *Pesach* on the fourteenth day of the month, there on the plains of Yericho. 11 **The day after *Pesach* they ate what the land produced, *matsab* and roasted ears of grain that day. 12 The following day, after they had eaten food produced in the land, the *man* ended.** From then on the people of Isra’el no longer had *man*; instead, that year, they ate the produce of the land of Kena’an.

Gilgal means: rolling away, separating, a *circle* of standing stones, rolling together, or uniting with God.

Gilgal will become a place of worship but things will soon change. Amos tells us that Gilgal and Bethel the nearby town, became places of pagan worship, where people would come from miles around to ply their spiritual goods and show off their prowess in spiritual things.

It is not hard to see that this pattern continues today in the church. Personal agendas, reputations and spiritual groupies amass at every convention. Tables of merchandise spring up in every corner and often the purpose of the gathering is forgotten.

Though Parsha Tazria means 'She Conceives', it refers to the time after the mother has given birth to her child. She is subsequently unclean and has to refrain from all contact with others and this includes any intimacy with her husband.

The birth of her child and the instruction to circumcise the male child on the eighth day is at the top of the list of the passage. In this process we become aware that it is only the husband who can present the child for circumcision, as the wife is excluded because she is impure.

One thing we must realise is that a person who has become impure is not necessarily a person who has sinned.

The focus upon the title of the passage is very brief but what it establishes for us is the reminder that YHVH has made a covenant with His people. This Brit Milah, enforces His role within the covenant partnership as protector and provider.

The second part of the parsha focuses on the disease of leprosy and is our main pearl for this study.

Last week's parsha 'Shemini' reminds us that we are now in a very special time.

Remember the pattern: Israel leaves Egypt to embark on a new era. It begins with a period of making ready through observing the first Passover. Shemini tells us that we are now in an eighth day, a day of new beginnings — a new time in YHVH's calendar of creation. As each season renews itself, so do we. Having received Messiah's precious sacrifice, having been washed in the blood of the lamb and sprinkled in the water, we have been made clean and are now ready to enter the divine presence. I believe that as we enter into this study we will see that Yeshua also performed the right of purification written in these portions for us all.

But first let us consider what Tazria and Metzora mean for us.

Metzora is a mistranslation; it does not literally mean one who is a leper or bears the condition of leprosy (Hansen's disease). It is used as a euphemism for a person who through his condition or various acts makes himself impure and is cast out. So Metzora is the person. Tazria in the portion refers to natural conditions of the body regarding childbirth, menstruation and other emissions from the male and female body. These in themselves are not sinful whereas the Metzora/Person has committed an act that requires repentance. They bear the signs of the skin condition Tzara'at.

Because both conditions disallow personal contact with others, a separation from the community and entrance into the sanctuary, offerings must be made following the assessment of the conditions by a priest.

The sages teach that YHVH created our bodies to be sensitive and to react to the things which we think and feel.

They speak of a time when people were so sensitive and reactive to sin, that they could actually see a change on their skin because of something they said. When a person would speak bad things (**lashon hara**) about other people over and over again, blotches of discoloured skin, tzara'at, would appear on the body. The Torah calls this person a Metzora. Metzora is short for 'motzi shem ra' saying bad things about someone else. Tzara'at is therefore a type of ritual impurity or tumah considered to be a spiritual disease.

Watching what we say

The process of the purification of the Metzora and his reinstatement to the community must be administered to by the Kohen. The Kohanim are commanded to bless and to serve Israel with love and so the act of the Kohen by leaving the holiest place to walk to the outskirts of the city to attend to the Metzora (who now has been removed from the community having shown an unloving act) elevates the Kohen's own love for Israel.

It is considered that the major misdemeanour of the Metzora is gossip and the challenging of authority.

Numbers 12 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

¹² Miryam and Aharon began criticising Moshe on account of the Ethiopian woman he had married, for he had in fact married an Ethiopian woman. ² They said, "Is it true that Adonai has spoken only with Moshe? Hasn't he spoken with us too?" Adonai heard them. ³ Now this man Moshe was very humble, more so than anyone on earth. ⁴ Suddenly Adonai told Moshe, Aharon and Miryam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." The three of them went out.

⁵ Adonai came down in a column of cloud and stood at the entrance to the tent. He summoned Aharon and Miryam, and they both went forward. ⁶ He said, "Listen to what I say: when there is a prophet among you, I, Adonai, make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. ⁷ But it isn't that way with my servant Moshe. He is the only one who is faithful in my entire household. ⁸ With him I speak face to face and clearly, not in riddles; he sees the image of Adonai. So why weren't you afraid to criticise my servant Moshe?" ⁹ The anger of Adonai flared up against them, and he left.

¹⁰ But when the cloud was removed from above the tent, Miryam had tzara'at, as white as snow. Aharon looked at Miryam, and she was as white as snow. ¹¹ Aharon said to Moshe, "Oh, my lord, please don't punish us for this sin we committed so foolishly. ¹² Please don't let her be like a stillborn baby, with its body half eaten away when it comes out of its mother's womb!" ¹³ Moshe cried to Adonai, "Oh God, I beg you, please, heal her!" ¹⁴ Adonai answered Moshe, "If her father had merely spit in her face, wouldn't she hide herself in shame for seven days? So let her be shut out of the camp for seven days; after that, she can be brought back in." ¹⁵ Miryam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not travel until she was brought back in. ¹⁶ Afterwards, the people went on from Hazeret and camped in the Pa'ran Desert.

Deuteronomy 24:8-9

"Be careful against an infection of leprosy that you diligently observe and do according to all that the Levitical priests teach you; as I have commanded them, so you shall be careful to do. "Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt

Leviticus 22:2-4

"Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they dedicate to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am the LORD. "Say to them, 'If any man among all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy gifts which the sons of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from before Me; I am the LORD. **'No man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a leper or who has a discharge, may eat of the holy gifts until he is clean** And if one touches anything made unclean by a corpse or if a man has a seminal emission,

2 Chronicles 26:19-23 - Uzziah's attempts to usurp the authority of the priests.

But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. **King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper,** for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.

Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first to last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written. So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the grave which belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." And Jotham his son became king in his place.

Other conditions for the affliction

Lashon Hara – The Evil Tongue

In general terms, lashon hara means "the evil tongue." Speaking profanities and slander is inclusive in the concept. Lashon hara means saying something bad about another person even if it happens to be true. In other words, lashon hara is gossip, spreading evil or expressing a critical spirit about others. Such behaviour is explicitly forbidden in Lev. 19:16.

Leviticus 19:16 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

16 "Do not go around spreading slander among your people, but also don't stand idly by when your neighbour's life is at stake; I am Adonai.

Do you recall these passages in Exodus 3 and 4 where YHVH tells Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the people go and that the women should ask for gold and silver and clothing from their neighbours? Moses response in Exodus 4 is that the Israelites won't believe him.

Well, guess what? What did YHVH command Moses to do?

Exodus 4 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

4 Moshe replied, "But I'm certain **they** won't believe me, and they won't listen to what I say, because they'll say, 'Adonai did not appear to you.'" 2 Adonai answered him, "What is that in your hand?" and he said, "A staff." 3 He said, "Throw it on the ground!" and he threw it on the ground. It turned into a snake, and Moshe recoiled from it. 4 Then Adonai said to Moshe, "Put your hand out and take it by the tail." He reached out with his hand and took hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand. 5 "This is so that they will believe that Adonai, the God of their fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya'akov, has appeared to you!"

6 Furthermore Adonai said to him, "Now put your hand inside your coat." He put his hand in his coat; and when he took it out his hand was leprous, as white as snow. 7 Then God said, "Now put your hand back in your coat." He put his hand back in his coat; and when he took it out, it was as healthy as the rest of his body.

According to the Midrash, the first person to get tzara'at was Moses himself. When the LORD told Moses that he wanted to rescue Israel from bondage in Egypt, Moses told YHVH, "**they** won't believe that You have sent me!"

Even though what Moses said was true it was considered by YHVH of him that he had spoken ill of Israel.

During Yom Kippur there is a part called Al Cheit (for the sin) which is a time when a list of sins are confessed. It is said 10 times during the Yom Kippur service. There are 43 in all and 11 of them refer to sin committed by the lips or speech.

The Talmud tells that the tongue is an instrument so dangerous that it must be kept hidden from view, behind two protective walls (the mouth and teeth) to prevent its misuse.

Evil speech is grievous. For this reason, some sources indicate that there is no forgiveness for lashon hara (disparaging speech). This illustrates the seriousness of improper speech.

Challenging YHVH's authority.

The human sin, the original sin of the man and woman in the garden of YHVH, was a contentious one. The serpent planted the seed of doubt and ultimately distrust in the minds of the humans and thus YHVH's only option was to remove them from His abode. The struggle of man to gain entry back into the divine dwelling has been his constant quest. His inability to do that is YHVH's response to convince man of who He is and what he has done.

Distrust or faithlessness in YHVH comes from not knowing Him. There will always be those in our race that will not want to know Him and though He makes Himself known, the created will still rather worship the created and not the creator. For them there is hopelessness, and sadly they will be lost, but for those who desire to know YHVH and receive the offering of His Son Yeshua, there is hope through faith. YHVH has made a way that we can enter again into His house, and ultimately one day, the Bride who has been washed and made clean by His word will enter the house for all time as His wife.

What Defiles a Man

Mathew 15:17“Do you not yet realise that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then is eliminated? 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these things defile a man.

James 3:6

The tongue also is a fire, a world of wickedness among the parts of the body. It pollutes the whole person, sets the course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Proverbs 21:23 Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

There are many more scriptures that speak about the use of our speech, but Colossians 4:6 reminds us;

Colossians 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. What about today's

The culture of slander, abhorrent, disparaging speech and false accusation, is rife in our world today. The people in the media to whom we turn to find out our daily information, gossip, gripe and feed us the culture or flavour of the day. Misinformation and fake news swamps the news. It raises and brings down all and sundry. Success is to be both celebrated and despised, but popularity in the world of the celebrity is time limited until attitudes to a lifestyle or philosophy change.

There is, and should be only, one word we turn to for the truth. However, people turn to the hand that feeds them — to those who report what they want to believe. There is a saying in our ministry which my brother uses; 'do you believe what you read, or read what you believe'?

In psychology the process of gravitating to something — a word or a belief or a system that reflects our values — is called 'cognitive bias'. I suppose we can all say we sway in two directions in some way. We believe or do not believe. My faith in Christ, is irrelevant to someone who does not believe in Him. A creationist does not believe in the matter of evolution. The philosophies of man demand that there is no absolute, and it is the evolution of thoughts and processes that change us.

Believers gravitate to the sacred scriptures of God and believe that His word is infallible and inherent; that there is no shadow of turning in it because God Himself is unchanging — Yeshua is the way the truth and the life, and that His way is the right and only way. In a sense our minds have become changed by the daily consumption of His bread.

Those who do not believe consume a different menu. We pray for all unbelievers and that their pallets will change and the Lord presents to them a different meal.

In the meantime our thoughts and minds are in conflict with the cognition of a wicked world. We are meant to react differently, showing grace and mercy, compassion, love, patience, understanding and kindness, knowing that we were once a member of this disbelieving group.

If God tells us not to gossip and slander each other, then there must be a pending judgement upon us, unless He has wiped that particular command off His list. The sign of the leper is a sign of someone

who is cast out from community and is deemed unclean. This is truly a paradox because God chooses that which is unclean to be made clean and to be a witness of God's grace upon them, but instead of being accepted back into the community He asks of them to come out and be separate for Him. Believers are a type of spiritual leper in this sense, and in another sense they still remain rejected by society.

Today's social network culture and the freedom of speech allows people to slander and speak ill, threaten or curse openly. People assume that it is somehow acceptable that such talk is and part of our common language. But there is something, a notion of what is right in all of us. Cursing might be popular, unsavoury language in the most, is just generally tolerated and accepted as basically ignorant.

However, when a person commits 'lashon hara' to you, and their reproach extends beyond some distant remark, how do you respond? This is what the Lord looks at in us.

We might feel angry and wish to retaliate but generally with a few deep breaths we realise that we can only be disappointed with what has transpired and with the response from ourselves.

It's not nice to hear people speaking negatively about or speaking unjustified remarks to others, especially when their information is based upon an echo of someone else's remark.

We must learn, and I know this is difficult to wipe such remarks away from our memory banks, forgive the person and pray that the repercussions of any remark will be dealt with accordingly.

The Lord vindicates His people and causes tribulation upon those who cause them distress.

2 Thessaloninas 1:5-7

6 [It is a fair decision] since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with distress *and* affliction those who distress *and* afflict you.

He does not like anyone talking about His family.

Friends, the tongue is a mighty weapon. It can praise and curse, it can declare the forgiveness of sin and make something pure and it can build positively — but it can blaspheme, defile, breed contempt, destroy and consume a person's mind and manifest in the most heinous and abhorrent ways. It is much like the hand, which can make the most beautiful things for God and yet also create idols.

As we walk into this new week, let us consider our words and actions. Let us be quick to pray and ask for forgiveness for unbecoming ways. The enemy is constantly in the background trying to make us fail.

We can find comfort only in knowing that the Lord knows us in all our ways, and despite them, He chooses to use us for His glory. It may sound strange, but I find comfort in knowing that I'm not perfect. Every day I contend with thoughts and the potential reactions of my old self when something upsets or disturbs me. However, knowing that God is my strength when I am weak does not mean that I can play the 'weak card' every time. These are the challenges of the believer's life.

May the Lord bless you and strengthen you in these exciting and troubling times.

Until next time.

Shalom

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Numbers 6:

24 'Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishmerekha.

[May Adonai bless you and keep you.]

25 Ya'er Adonai panav eleikha vichunekka.

[May Adonai make his face shine on you and show you his favour.]

26 Yissa Adonai panav eleikha v'yasem l'kha shalom

[May Adonai lift up his face toward you and give you peace.]

Glossary

Midrash: In Judaism, the *Midrash* is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (*Aggadah*) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (*halakha*), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (*Tanakh*)

Targum: **Targum Onkelos** (or **Onqelos**), is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum (Aramaic translation) to the Torah. However, its early origins may have been western, in Israel. Its authorship is attributed to Onkelos, a famous convert to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE)

Targum Jonathan: **Targum Jonathan**, otherwise referred to as **Targum Yonasan/Yonatan**, is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum to the Nevi'im/Prophets. Its early origins, however, are western (i.e. from the Land of Israel), and the Talmudic tradition attributes its authorship to Jonathan ben Uzziel of Jerusalem in the time of King Herod

Tannaim: Tannaim were the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years.

Talmud: The **Talmud** means "instruction, learning", "teach, study", is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism. The term "Talmud" normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the **Babylonian Talmud** (*Talmud Bavli*), although there is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*) or Palestinian

The Talmud has two components:

1. The Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law;
2. The Gemara (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible

Jubilees: The Book of Jubilees claims to present "the history of the division of the days of the Law, of the events of the years, the year-weeks, and the jubilees of the world" as revealed to Moses (in addition to the Torah or "Instruction") by angels while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. The

chronology given in Jubilees is based on multiples of seven; the jubilees are periods of 49 years, seven "year-weeks", into which all of time has been divided

Vulgate: This is the Latin Bible. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 CE, this text became known as the 'versio vulgata', which means 'common translation'.

Rashi, whose real name is Shlomo Yitzchaki was born in France in the 11th century. Rashi wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the Hebrew Bible.

Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides became better known by the acronym Rambam. He was born in 1138 in Cordoba, Spain. He was a Sephardic Jew and influential philosopher. He is considered to be among the greatest of Torah Scholars.

Nachmanides- 13th century French Jewish Philosopher, commonly known by the acronym; Rambam.