



*“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*

**Vayikra (Leviticus) 14:1-15:33**  
**M'tzora – (Person afflicted with Tzara'at)**  
9th April 2022/ 8 Nisan 5782

Shabbat Shalom Talmadim, and welcome to this week's Parsha Pearl 'M'tzora

In last week's pearl, Tazria we were introduced to the following: The discussion of the laws of tumah v'taharah, ritual impurity, and purity. The ritual purification of a woman after childbirth and the circumcision of the male child on the eighth day of life. Types of skin afflictions and the judging of the various types by the Kohen and the pronouncement of 'Tamei' (impure) and 'Tahor' (pure)

We also witness the casting out of the community of the M'tzora (a person afflicted with Tzara'at) and the duration of days of quarantine.

So let us read the opening verses. Lev 14:1-20

**14 Adonai said to Moshe, 2 “This is to be the law concerning the person afflicted with tzara'at on the day of his purification. He is to be brought to the Cohen, 3 and the Cohen is to go outside the camp and examine him there. If he sees that the tzara'at sores have been healed in the afflicted person, 4 then the cohen will order that two living clean birds be taken for the one to be purified, along with cedar-wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop leaves. 5 The Cohen is to order one of the birds slaughtered in a clay pot over running water. 6 As for the live bird, he is to take it with the cedar-wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird slaughtered over running water, 7 and sprinkle the person to be purified from the tzara'at seven times. Next he is to set the live bird free in an open field. 8 He who is to be purified must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe himself in water. Then he will be clean; and after that, he may enter the camp; but he must live outside his tent for seven days. 9 On the seventh day he is to shave all the hair off his head, also his beard and eyebrows — he must shave off all his hair; and he is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in water; and he will be clean. 10 “On the eighth day he is to take two male lambs without defect, one female lamb in its first year without defect and six-and-a-half quarts of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with olive oil, and two-thirds of a pint of olive oil. 11 The Cohen purifying him is to place the person being purified with these items before Adonai at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 12 The Cohen is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering with the two-thirds-pint of olive oil, then wave**

them as a wave offering before Adonai. 13 He is to slaughter the male lamb at the place in the sanctuary for slaughtering sin offerings and burnt offerings, because the guilt offering belongs to the cohen, just like the sin offering; it is especially holy. 14 The Cohen is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. 15 Next, the Cohen is to take some of the two-thirds-pint of olive oil and pour it into the palm of his own left hand, 16 dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand and sprinkle from the oil with his finger seven times before Adonai. 17 *Then the Cohen is to put some of the remaining oil in his hand on the tip of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, on the big toe of his right foot and on the blood of the guilt offering.* 18 Finally, the Cohen is to put the rest of the oil in his hand on the head of the person being purified; and the Cohen will make atonement for him before Adonai. 19 The Cohen is to offer the sin offering and make atonement for the person being purified because of his uncleanness; afterwards, he is to slaughter the burnt offering. 20 The Cohen is to offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar; thus the Cohen will make atonement for him; and he will be clean.

I have highlighted two aspects of the passage which reflect a process of anointing of Aaron as High Priest. **Lev 8:22** Then he presented the second ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 23 *Moses slaughtered it and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.* 24 He also had Aaron's sons come near; and Moses put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot.

This is all about purification and consecration. It is considered that the spiritual aspect of man is pure, but it is the outward appearance that shows the imperfections of this world. The significance is that it is only the priest that determines purity and judges whether a person with the malady is clean or unclean. This is the essence of the whole process; *to determine whether the person has gone through a process of repentance and is able to return to the community at large.*

The last two portions concentrate on this malady — perceived to be leprosy. This is incorrect because not all skin conditions are leprosy. The overall term is simply used to describe a condition which overlies an underlying problem, which is of course sinfulness.

Here are two passages which highlight the result of gossip and arrogance;  
**Numbers 12:1** Now Miriam and Aaron talked against Moses [their brother] because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite woman. 2 And they said, has the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Has He not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. 3 Now the man Moses was very meek (gentle, kind, and humble) or above all the men on the face of the earth. 4 Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, Come out, you three, to the Tent of Meeting. And the three of them came out. 5 The LORD came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the Tent door and called Aaron and Miriam, and they came forward. 6 And He said, hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make Myself known to him in a vision and speak to him in a dream. 7 But not so with My servant Moses; he is entrusted and faithful in all My house. 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth [directly], clearly and not in dark speeches; and he beholds the form of the LORD.

**Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?**  
9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from over the Tent, behold, Miriam was leprosy, as white as snow. And Aaron looked at Miriam, and, behold, she was leprosy! 11 And Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my lord, I plead with you, lay not the sin upon us in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 Let her not be as one dead, already half decomposed when he comes out of his mother's womb. 13 And Moses cried to the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech You! 14 And the LORD said to Moses, if her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed for seven days? Let her be shut up outside the camp for seven days,

and after that let her be brought in again. 15 So Miriam was shut up without the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey on until Miriam was brought in again.

2 Chron 26...3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. 5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper....

...v16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD:

See also this in Psalm 120

In my distress, I cried to the LORD, And He heard me.

**2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips**

**And from a deceitful tongue.**

**3 What shall be given to you,**

**Or what shall be done to you, You false tongue?**

**4 Sharp arrows of the warrior,**

**With coals of the broom tree!**

You might ask why these conditions are not manifest in the body (excuse the pun) today, when we see so much lack of faith, arrogance, disrespect, and gossip amongst believers — all traits that disgrace the body and dishonour God. We also see that it was through disobedience and sacrilege, that Israel were overcome by their enemies, the temples destroyed and exile ensued .

If this is a pattern for us, then why does it seem that YHVH's judgement is held?

This is one of my favourite passages and one which I encourage you to declare each morning.

**Exodus 34: 5 Adonai descended in the cloud, stood with him there and pronounced the name of Adonai. 6 Adonai passed before him and proclaimed: "YUD-HEH-VAV-HEH!!! Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh [Adonai] is God, merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace and truth; 7 showing grace to the thousandth generation, forgiving offences, crimes, and sins; yet not exonerating the guilty, but causing the negative effects of the parents' offences to be experienced by their children and grandchildren, and even by the third and fourth generations."**

This passage is reflected throughout scripture, but this passage for me exemplifies the beauty of love, compassion, and forgiveness we receive by knowing God whose very name embodies His complete nature. This is an honour to know, my friends, and this is why it is the pivotal command.

We cannot take the Lord's name in vain or misuse it. The name He revealed to Moses is revealed to us. This is different from the 'I AM' proclamation in EXODUS 3:14

Let us read this beautiful psalm of David. Psalm 103

**1. Bless the LORD, O my soul;**

**And all that is within me bless His holy name!**  
**2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,**  
**And forget not all His benefits:**  
**3 Who forgives all your iniquities,**  
**Who heals all your diseases,**  
**4 Who redeems your life from destruction,**  
**Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,**  
**5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things,**  
**So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**  
**6 The LORD executes righteousness**  
**And justice for all who are oppressed.**  
**7 He made known His ways to Moses,**  
**His acts to the children of Israel.**  
**8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,**  
**Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.**  
**9 He will not always strive with us,**  
**Nor will He keep His anger forever.**  
**10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,**  
**Nor punished us according to our iniquities.**

So why do we not see this manifestation today?

The sages say that the occurrence of tzara'at was confined to biblical times, implying that later generations are not of the spiritual calibre that allows for this supra-natural affliction. The reason for this can be understood from the opening words of the Torah's description of the metzora. "*Shall occur*" implies a happenstance, something out of character; "in the skin of his flesh" likewise indicates that the blemish is only superficial, affecting only the most external layer of the person. In other words, we are speaking of one whose inner being is free of imperfection, and in whom any "blemish" or malady exists only on the outside. Thus the Talmud (Sanhedrin 98b) describes Moshiach as a metzora, signifying that the messianic age is a time in which the evils which have infested the world and humanity rise to the surface so that they can be decisively overcome and cured.

Here is a discussion between rabbis in the Babylonian Talmud. It refers to a discussion on whom the Messiah will be and what his name is:

Rab said: The world was created only on David's account .

24 Samuel said: On Moses account;

25 R. Johanan said: For the sake of the Messiah. What is his [the Messiah's] name? — The School of R. Shila said: His name is Shiloh, for it is written until Shiloh come.

26 The School of R. Yannai said: His name is Yinnon, for it is written, His name shall endure for ever:

27 e'er the sun was, his name is Yinnon.

28 The School of R. Haninah maintained: His name is Haninah, as it is written, Where I will not give you Haninah.

29 Others say: His name is Menahem the son of Hezekiah, for it is written, Because Menahem ['the comforter'], that would relieve my soul,

The Rabbis said: **His name is 'the leper scholar,' as it is written, surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

This, of course, refers to the passage in Isaiah 53:4.

What did the Rabbis call Him? Just reflect on this for a moment. I believe it will help unwrap the rest of the study.

Now we address this passage in Luke before we go on: **Jesus Heals Ten Men with Leprosy.**

**Luke 17: 11 now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy[a] met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"**

**14 When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” 19 Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.**

There is an allusion in this event. Remember, it is not a parable. Ten men were outcasts. They had become unclean. The affliction of Tzara’at was considered to be a malady incurred through an underlying spiritual condition. Now consider this. The ten men represent the diaspora of Israel— included in them is a man from Samaria who is referred to as a foreigner. Originally it was the territory of Ephraim and half tribe of Manasseh. The Samaritans were considered outcasts on their own because they were of Jewish and Gentile origin and therefore not considered to be Jewish at all. Again in this passage, we see the grace and compassion of YHVH at work through Messiah who includes them in the healing and restoration process. They are considered to be part of the Commonwealth of Israel too.

**Romans 9:14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Absolutely not! 15 For He says to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” 16 So then, it does not depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.**

We see clearly that even in the Tanakh that grace is at work because Teshuvah (repentance) can be appropriated in the life of those who walk with God in all His ways. This is a condition. Grace does not allow us to sin and get away with it as Paul writes, but allows us through the shed blood of Messiah Yeshua, to ask for forgiveness through His name. He has ratified the sacrifice and made believers through faith acceptable and worthy to receive forgiveness. We must never forget that. This ministry has taught the differences between the Greek and Hebrew concepts of repentance. Appropriating the reality of that process allows us not to be counted out even when we fail miserably so many times. Teshuvah does not allow us to change our mind but to agree and to be resolved in walking the path of faith knowing that YHVH understands us and sees our every weakness. The declaration in the prayer of our Lord Yeshua tells us that YHVH will watch over us despite knowing the temptations that present themselves to us, and that we shall not fall into evil or sin against Him. We can only do this when we draw near to God and resist the devil. Before we move on, we must understand that grace, as a power, is given to every believer to do that which God commissions us to do.

**Romans 6: 1-4 What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin live in it any longer? 3 Or aren’t you aware that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? 4 We therefore were buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life.**

And again in

**Titus 2:11-14, For God’s grace, which brings deliverance, has appeared to all people. 12 It teaches us to renounce godlessness and worldly pleasures, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives now, in this age; 13 while continuing to expect the blessed fulfilment of our certain hope, which is the appearing of the Sh’khinah of our great God and the appearing of our Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah. 14 He gave himself up on our behalf in order to free us from all violation of Torah and purify for himself a people who would be his own, eager to do good.**

Having looked at the conditions that prevail regarding Tzara’at and the M’ztora, we must not overlook this passage: **14:33 Adonai said to Moshe and Aharon, 34 “When you have entered the land of Kena’an which I am giving you as a possession, and I put an infection of tzara’at in a house in the land that you possess, 35 then the owner of the house is to**

come and tell the cohen, 'It seems to me that there may be an infection in the house.' 36 The Cohen is to order the house emptied before he goes in to inspect the infection, so that everything in the house won't be made unclean; afterwards, the Cohen is to enter and inspect the house. 37 He will examine the infection; and if he sees that the infection is in the walls of the house, with greenish or reddish depressions that seem to go in deeper than the surface of the wall, 38 he is to go out of the house to its door and seal up the house for seven days. 39 The Cohen will come again on the seventh day and examine the house; if he sees that the infection has spread over its walls, 40 he is to order them to remove the infected stones and throw them into some unclean place outside the city. 41 Next, he is to have the inside of the house thoroughly scraped, and the scraped-off plaster is to be discarded outside the city in an unclean place. 42 Finally, other stones must be set in the place of the first stones and other plaster used to relater the house. 43 If the infection returns and breaks out in the house after the stones have been removed and the house scraped and plastered; 44 then the Cohen is to enter and examine it. If he sees that the infection has spread in the house, it is a contagious tzara'at in the house; it is unclean. 45 He must break down the house and take its stones, timber and plaster out of the city to an unclean place. 46 Moreover, whoever enters the house at any time while it is sealed up will be unclean until evening. 47 Whoever lies down or eats in the house must wash his clothes. 48 If the Cohen enters, examines and sees that the infection has not spread in the house since it was plastered; then he is to declare the house clean; because the infection is cured.

The following passage reflects the sin offering on Yom Kippur. 'Kippur' means to make expiation: the act of making amends or reparation for guilt or wrongdoing — 'atonement'.

Cleaning Tzara'at in the house.

**49 "To purify the house, he is to take two birds, cedar-wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop leaves. 50 He is to slaughter one of the birds in a clay pot over running water. 51 He is to take the cedar-wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the live bird and dip them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52 He will purify the house with the blood of the bird, the running water, the live bird, the cedar-wood, the hyssop and the scarlet yarn. 53 But he is to set the live bird free outside the city in an open field; thus will he make atonement for the house; and it will be clean.**

A teaching in the Midrash also applies a benefaction to a reason why the condition or mildew is placed upon the walls of the house.

When you come into the land of Canaan . . . **I will put the plague of tzaraat in a house of the land of your possession (14:34)**

It is good news for the people that these plagues would come upon them, because the Amorites [residents of Canaan] concealed treasures of gold in the walls of their houses during the forty years, the Israelites were in the wilderness, so that they would not possess them when they conquered the land, and in consequence of the plague they would pull down the house and discover them.

In summary of this pearl, I would like us to consider this: Why is the affliction of leprosy given in the first place?

I would say this — that scandal and gossip and arrogance are abhorrent to God first and foremost. There is no joy in Him when His children speak against each other. Slander and gossip cause the community to be undermined and His precious name to be shamed. Our words to one another should be to encourage, equip and build. These are the grace gifts which are imparted to all of us, not only to those who hold office with the Holy Spirit graces. We need to be positive and hopeful — the characteristics of faith and trusting in God.

So why the affliction? The sages see that man has two spiritual states; one of the first man 'Adam' this is the state of 'Adam' and that of the common man for example 'Moses.' He is referred to as

'ish.' The spiritual state of the ancients was closer to the state of 'Adam,' and thus the afflictions of sin were more acute.

With this in mind I propose this: when man sinned before God, the resulting phenomena occurred. The original covering of light/shekinah fell from them (they fell from their glorious presence of God) and YHVH desired to give them a new skin to cover them. Through a conversation with the serpent, the first couple agreed that YHVH was not who He said He was. This is scandalous gossip. Distrust ensued, and because they could no longer have complete trust in YHVH, they could no longer remain in His presence. They received a new covering – 'human skin'.

As we have highlighted, gossip and scandalous talk are divisive. They bring about distrust and break communities, marriages, and families. It can even bring down those of status and esteem. The affliction of Tzara'at/leprosy reminds us that such sin is grievous before God and thus this malady manifests upon the *new skin* as a result.

Could it therefore be that YHVH caused a contamination upon the skin of the human body as a sign to mind us of that first conversation between the first couple and the serpent?

I think maybe so!

To conclude: for us, the atoning sacrifice of our Messiah proves this to Father God. Through His declaration and shed blood we are made clean and right, and the way back to family and the divine community is open. It is interesting also that we see the symbolism of the scourging and stripping of Messiah's flesh.

Yeshua took the curse upon His flesh; the piercing of His side, hands and feet, the issue of blood and water — a symbol of cleansing — and brought them together for us all to see and understand. That is the miracle of His atonement for us.

Until next time.

Shabbat Shalom

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Additional readings:

Malachi 3:4-24, Matt 17:9, Hebrews 13:4



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.

