



Message 4-13-19
Metsora
Leviticus 14:1-15:33
Malachi 4:1-6
Matthew 17:10-13

Introduction

Basing their ideas on a story found in the Book of Numbers, the rabbis of the *Midrash* viewed leprosy as an external sign of internal decay. Illness became a symbol for corruption, immorality, and callousness. The link between illness and a lapse of ethics arises from the story of Miriam's criticism of Moses's wife for being a Cushite. Clearly, Miriam used her sister-in-law's ethnicity as a pretext for attacking her brother. Since her *tzara'at* resulted from her critical words, the rabbis naturally associated the two. Thus the Biblical laws on infectious disease became an extended metaphor for self-centeredness, critical or slanderous speech, and hateful deeds.

Leviticus 15:31

31 `Thus you shall separate the **children** of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that *is* among them. (NKJ)

01121 בֶּן {bane}

Meaning: son, grandson, child, member of a group

What is the purpose of what is known as *tzara'at*? The rabbis of old concluded that it had to do with self-centeredness, critical or slanderous speech, and hateful deeds. One rabbi known as Chofetz Chaim, developed an entire teaching system centered on the issue of what is called *lashon hara*, or the evil tongue. There are teachings that focus on this problem, but there is one passage of scripture that focuses in on this issue.

James 3:5 So too the tongue is a tiny part of the body, yet it boasts great things. See how a little fire sets a whole forest ablaze! ⁶ Yes, the tongue is a fire, a world of wickedness. The tongue is so placed in our body that it defiles every part of it, setting ablaze the whole of our life; and it is set on fire by Gehinnom itself. ⁷ For people have tamed and continue to tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures; ⁸ but the tongue no one can tame- it is an unstable and evil thing, full of death-dealing poison! ⁹ With it we bless *ADONAI*, the Father; and with it we curse people, who were made in

the image of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing! Brothers, it isn't right for things to be this way. (CJB)

The Apostle or *Shaliach* James, who was named Jacob, wrote these words which describes the tongue and the good and the bad that can come from it. How can we bless God in one breath and curse our brothers and sisters in another? It is not an easy thing to tame the tongue. A wild animal may be easier to tame than our tongues, and this will be our downfall because if we do not watch what comes out of our mouths, our words will stand as a witness against us in the day of judgment, may cause us great harm, and could possibly cause us to be cast out of His kingdom into the outer darkness. How can one claim to be a disciple of Messiah Yeshua and yet tear down not just his brothers and sisters but cast aspersions on the source of our redemption – Yeshua? We must learn how to be careful with what comes out of our mouths, my friends. We are not perfect as shown to us by our heavenly Father who sent His Son Yeshua to redeem us and bring us back into the family of God.

Deuteronomy 24:8 "Take heed in an outbreak of **leprosy**, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, so you shall be careful to do. (NKJ)

06883 צָרַעַת *tsara`ath* {tsaw-rah'-ath}

Meaning: leprosy, in people, malignant skin disease (Le. 13-14), in clothing, a mildew or mold (Le. 13:47-52) 1c) in buildings

Leprosy or *tzara`at* is not leprosy as we understand it to be today. It is the closest we can come to what we understand about this sin, which is confirmed by a priest and not a physician. Were there physicians among the Children of Israel in the Wilderness? Is all illness that we encounter due to God testing and punishing us, or could some of it be due to what we have done to the world in which we live? Is climate change real or just an illusion as many believe? Has man damaged God's creation to the point that it will take the creation of a new heavens and a new earth once God deals with His enemies and removes sin from His creation once and for all? *Tzara`at* can be found not just in humans but in the buildings where people live. The physical confirmation of the sin is seen not just on us but in the places we choose to call home. It can also appear in clothing. It is all encompassing in revealing what we would like to keep hidden.

Metsora means "one being diseased," and is usually attached to the preceding portion *tazria*. It is connected in how the priests were to go about diagnosing the problem and what was to be done about it. The most apparent application of this disease was when Miriam came against her brother Moses, challenging him for leadership of Israel or to share in the leadership. For her words against not just Moses, but against his wife, she was struck with *tazara`t*, and it was at the behest of Aaron that Moses who interceded on her behalf with God. God relented but still had her put outside the camp until the time had passed and she had recovered. What we know as leprosy has, for the most part, been overcome, but do we know what *tazara`t* truly is, and does it still exist today, perhaps in other forms?

Malachi 4:1-6

19 For the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the proud and evildoers will be stubble; the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says *ADONAI-Tzva'ot*, "and leave them neither root nor branch. ²⁰ But to you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will break out leaping, like calves released from the stall. ²¹ You will trample the wicked, they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I take action," says *ADONAI-Tzva'ot*. ²² "Remember the *Torah* of Moshe my servant, which I enjoined on him at Horev, statutes and judgments for all Isra'el. ²³ Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of *ADONAI*. ²⁴ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers; otherwise I will come and strike the land with complete destruction." [Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of *ADONAI*.] (CJB)

Remember the Torah of Moshe. This is what we are told for when the day of judgment comes. It will be like a furnace, He will consume the proud and evildoers as stubble, and they will no longer have any root or branch. They will be cut off from the root that feeds Israel, into whom comes all those who belong to Messiah Yeshua. The day of choosing will come upon us, and we will have to stand up for what we believe. Pray that we will do the right thing and stand up for our God and His Son Yeshua. We will stand up for the Torah the Holy One gave to us through His Son Yeshua. Yeshua taught His *talmidim* and they, in turn, passed the teaching to their *talmidim* down through the ages in the words they wrote down so we would all have a record of what Yeshua taught and what He believed. He believed in the teachings of His Father to Him, and He taught us that through Him, we would have redemption as long as we walked according to His teachings as shown to us in the Torah given to Moses at Mount Sinai and recorded in the book of the Torah with all that had been revealed to him by God.

Matthew 17:10-13

10 The *talmidim* asked him, "Then why do the *Torah*-teachers say that Eliyahu must come first?" ¹¹ He answered, "On the one hand, Eliyahu is coming and will restore all things; ¹² on the other hand, I tell you that Eliyahu has come already, and people did not recognize him but did whatever they pleased to him. In the same way, the Son of Man too is about to suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the *talmidim* understood that he was talking to them about Yochanan the Immerser. (CJB)

Who is this Elijah in which Yeshua is speaking? Is it the Elijah of old or one who comes in the power of Elijah filled with the *Ruach HaKodesh* to bring the word of redemption to the people who embrace the covenant of Torah and hold to their faith in Messiah Yeshua, through whom the Father offers us salvation?

Matthew 11:13 For all the prophets and the Torah prophesied until Yochanan. ¹⁴ Indeed, if you are willing to accept it, he is Eliyahu, whose coming was predicted. ¹⁵ If you have ears, then hear! (CJB)

Yochanan, John, the Immerser, is the one to which Yeshua was referring. He would prepare the way for Yeshua's coming. As Yeshua stepped out in His ministry as given to

Him by His Father, Yochanan knew his time was ending. He needed to step out of the way and allow the Son of God to come forward in all the might and power His Father had given to Him to teach the people what true faith was and what the gift was for those who held fast to their belief in Yeshua as Messiah. Is the gift of eternal life free, or does it come with a requirement to live a life according to the teachings of our Redeemer, Yeshua, who taught how to live the covenant of Torah in our lives.

Torah Man says: "What is a free gift? Aren't all gifts free?"

Blessings in Messiah Yeshua,

Mordecai Silver

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