

Introduction to Parsha #27: Tazria¹

READINGS:	Torah Tazria:	Leviticus 12:1 – 13:59
	Haftarah:	II Kings 4:42 – 5:27
	B'rit Chadasha:	Luke 2:21-36



When the days of her tahorah are fulfilled

[Leviticus 12:6a]

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 1st Petition – *Da'at* [Intimate Knowledge/Understanding]

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l'emor – And the Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying ... *Daber el-b'nei Yisra'el l'emor*– Speak to B'nei Yisrael, saying: *Ishah ki tazria v'yaldah zachar*– a woman who is impregnated and gives birth to a boy Leviticus 12:1-2a.

Our readings this week will introduce us to the heart and soul of the Ultimate Divine Bridal Makeover protocol – the *Kedusha Discourse*. The revelation stream will be 100% Heaven-sent. The Holy One will be doing all the talking. Our assignment is simple: *sh'ma, sh'mar, memorize, meditate, discuss, and asah* – then go forth into all the world, *rinse and repeat*. What we will be studying this week and the next four or five, you see, is the longest and deepest download of world-changing Heavenly Wisdom in human history. This section of Torah lays out in detail who *we are created to be* and *how we are to go about our assigned task of bringing Beauty, Wholeness, Health, and Holiness back into the fallen world*. In this Discourse the Creator teaches whoever will listen how to bring the transformative energy of Holy things, Healing words, and Whole-ness restoring Ways to bear upon the darkness-infested households, cultures, philosophies, institutions, and ideologies of earth – *i.e.* the dysfunctional realm of the common, profane, unclean, narcissistic, corrupted, infected, and abominable.

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Tazria - A Quick Look Ahead

Last week we learned that human beings can actually be brought into the dangerous minefield of *Kingdom Kryptonite* that Torah calls *tumah* [KJV ‘uncleanness’] by either *eating the flesh of* or *getting too close to/touching* certain living creatures –Some creatures of earth, you see – like predatory beasts, birds of prey and carrion, pigs, rabbits, shellfish, for example - have been so adversely impacted by mankind failing to ‘take dominion’ over Creation the way we were created to that they are now part of a realm we are not supposed to frequent. That introduction to the realms of *tahor* and *tamei* – KJV ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ - we are about to discover, was just *the tip of the iceberg*. This week, and for the next several, we will be discussing a number of other interactions, events, circumstances, and situations that can result in a human being entering a *tamei* state, and require active participation in an appropriate tikkun/restoration protocol. The Holy One wants us to know that merely avoiding contact with or ingestion of *tamei* animals, birds, insects, and sea creatures does not by any means insulate one from the *tamei* realm. Our fellow humans can under certain circumstances be just as effective carriers and communicants of *tamei* status as can animals. We will learn that with humans, the *tamei* status comes primarily *from within*. Everything that issues forth from a human being after the Fall has the potential to make that human being - and potentially all those around him or her - *tamei*. Here are some examples:

- *Negative, critical, or wounding thoughts, dark-energy emotions, and self-righteous attitudes we let take up residence in us;*
- *Unwholesome, self-willed words that issue forth from our lips;*
- *the conception of a child;*
- *The menstrual flow that issues forth from a woman of childbearing age;*
- *The seminal discharge of a man;*
- *the fluid, blood, baby and placenta that issue forth from a woman in the throes of childbirth;*
- *any unusual discharge from the human body.*

We will learn also of the consequence of *engaging in negative speech* at a time when the Holy One dwells in the midst of our camp, namely the development of the skin condition with which the Holy One struck Miryam when she spoke evil of Moshe. We will find that when the Holy One's Manifest Presence dwells in our midst evil speech results in the breakout of patches or lesions on the speaker's skin and/or on his or her garments, and/or on the walls of his or her tent or house.

The Holy One will teach us how to distinguish ordinary skin conditions resulting

from physical causes from *tzara'at*. The Holy One will also teach us how we are to treat a person with *tzara'at* – and even more importantly, how that person can be restored to a *tahor* condition.

Why We Are to Separate the Tahor from the Tamei

Even we who are called by the Holy One to be His chosen people, the ‘Salt of the Earth’, and the ‘Light to the Nations’, have within us as well the capacity to lead people – and Creation – away from life and health and peace and wholeness, toward death and sickness, and calamity and disintegration. We do not – and are not supposed to - live in a *tahor* bubble. As long as we live on earth it is inevitable that we will from time to time encounter and be affected by the realm of the *tamei*. We live in a world where things – and people – sometimes shatter ... and fragment ... and die. And inevitably when that happens, like it or not, the ‘Kingdom Kryptonite’ realm of fragmentation and death falls on us like raindrops on a rainy day and interrupts our perfect little lives. I call each such experience an ‘insult of *tumah*’.

Sometimes an *insult of tumah* occurs as a result of bad attitudes, crude speech, or destructive or irresponsible conduct on our part or on the part of others with whom we choose to associate. Other times it is just a ‘natural’ part of living in fallen Creation.

When - as in the present era - there is no *Mish'kan* and no supernatural fire on the Holy One’s altar in the midst of our Community illuminating the spiritual realities surrounding us, we almost never sense the affect the *tamei* realm is having on us. But it is having an effect on us, whether we see it or not. And if by virtue of familiarity with the great wisdom download I call the *Kedusha Discourse* we can come to understand the fragmentizing nature of the *tamei* realm, we will realize that even in a world without a *Mish'kan* we need to be to be ever cognizant of, constantly vigilant concerning, and always diligent to deal appropriately with that effect - *tamei* encroachment by *tamei* encroachment. If on the other hand we choose to pretend – or convince ourselves – that *tamei* encroachments of the type described in Leviticus no longer exist *because they are no longer seen* with the naked eye, we will tend to let the insults associated with those encroachments accumulate and aggregate. Gradually the cumulative weight of these encroachments will cause us to degenerate from us from the *tahor new creations of the Holy One bursting with life and wholeness* which we are called to be into *whited sepulchers filled with dead men’s bones, lovers of self and of pleasure* rather than lovers of God – a flavorless, shades-of-gray people who have a *form of godliness* but whose lives testify of the powerlessness thereof.

***Could it Really Be, that if We Just Become
Who We Were Created to Be, and Live Like We Have Been Instructed
to Live Here on Earth, in This Age, Our Status in the Age to Come
Will Take Care of Itself Without the Need of Organized Religion?***

The Holy One's prime concern in these passages is not, as some might desire, on what happens to us when we die; that is never mentioned at all. What the Holy One has on His mind is the here and now. He wants our focus to be on becoming the best 'us' we can be, individually and collectively, as we abide in and with Him, take on His attributes, and bring His Holiness and Wholeness into the mundane affairs of ordinary life, work, and social interaction. He is teaching us to be as much like Him – and represent Him to the world as accurately - as possible in this life, in ways that people can understand. At His direction, in His timing, and per His instructions we are to take common things – and people - and infuse them with holiness. And at His direction, in His timing, and per His instructions we are to take unclean things – and people – and infuse them with the healing energy of wholeness.

This is not best done in the hallowed halls of religion or by people who know only the pristine purity of Ivory Towers. It is not accomplished with 'beliefs', or with sermons on morality, with arguments over theological principles'. It has to be done in the real world, where the real people are. It has to be done at dinner tables, and bedchambers, and in the streets and gutters of the 'real world'. For this reason, the subjects the Holy One has been covering with us are as down to earth as they can get. He has spoken to us in detail about the seemingly mundane matter of what we are - and are not – to *eat*. He has cautioned us about what creatures of the earth we are, and are not, to hang around, get close to, touch, and thereby expose our immune systems to. If that weren't personal enough, He is about to get into our business even more. He is about to get all up into sensitive issues of gender, sexuality, and reproduction. Blessed is He Who is not offended!

***The Kedusha Discourse – Divine Instruction on How To Host the
Presence of Our Glorious Bridegroom-King and His Royal Court***

There are two primary types of revelation in the Torah. The first is *Divinely inspired narrative*. This was the most common type of revelation in *Sefer B'reshit [the Book of Genesis]* and in the first half of *Sefer Sh'mot [the Book of Exodus]*. The second primary type of revelation in the Torah is *Divine Speech* – *i.e.* that which is a direct release of Words from the Holy One's Mouth. This type of revelation comes straight from our Bridegroom-King's Beautiful Mind, and reveals His Wise, Compassionate Heart. Since we reached Sinai the primary revelation flow has taken the form of Divine Speech. The greatest download of Divine Speech

that has ever hit the earth is now flowing like rain. The occasional breaks of narrative seem to be provided merely to give context to the Discourses the Holy One is releasing. Our Bridegroom-King is taking us to school. We are delighting in the Bread from His Table; and we are regaling in the kisses of His Mouth.

The *Kedusha Discourse*— which began immediately after the narrative describing the death of Nadav and Avihu on Yom Ha-Sh’mini – constitutes the seventh major Divine Discourse of the Sinai Revelation Stream². The Holy One’s purpose of the *Kedusha Discourse* is to teach us not only how to *live and thrive* in the Manifest Presence of our Bridegroom-King – but how to become a trustworthy conduit of that Presence.

Clean realm' vs. 'unclean realm' and 'holy realm' vs. 'profane realm' issues are involved in every facet of life. The issue of what creatures are - and are not - intended to serve as 'food' is just a wake-up call - an introduction to *'The Physics of Realm Association and Representation 101'*.

Once we have awakened to the effect the *'clean/unclean'* and *'holy/profane'* distinctions are supposed to have on our most basic life-sustaining activity - i.e. food intake - the Holy One calls us to open our eyes to the *'Realm Science'* of absolutely everything we encounter in life. He calls us to bring the healing power of the 'clean realm' and the beauty and inspiration of the 'holy realm' into every interaction, every conversation, every activity, every circumstance, and even every controversy.

This is mission critical for a 'holy nation'. After all, if we do not know how - or even why - we and our families need to steer clear of the unclean and the profane, how can be of any good to anyone else, or the time in which we live, or even to the space we are allowed to occupy?

And, of course, 'steering clear' is not even the ultimate goal. Ultimately, the objective is to learn, employ, and teach *the Protocols of Return* – the plan of transition the Holy One has established for everyone who has been negatively impacted by the thoughts, words, behaviors, habits, and things of the unclean realm and/or profane realm to [a] be *made whole* [KJV 'clean'] again, and [b] to recapture the majesty, beauty, wisdom, and glory of the holy realm.

² The first seven major Sinaitic Discourses in order of their presentation are: 1. The *Betrothal Discourse* [Exodus 20]; 2. the *Mishpatim Discourse* [Exodus 22-23]; 3. the *Mish'kan Discourse* [Exodus 25-31]; 4. The *Midot Discourse* [Exodus 34]; 5. the *Korbanot Discourse* [Leviticus 1-7]; and 6. the *Yom Ha-Sh’mini Discourse* [Leviticus 8].

The Challenge of Hosting Royalty – At The Highest Level of Nobility Conceivable

Now that the Radiant Cloud of our Bridegroom-King's Presence has descended from the top of Mount Sinai into the center of the Camp, and the Creator of the Universe has accepted the *Mish'kan* as His Earthly Habitation, business-as-usual is out of the question. We are now *Hosting Royalty*. We are being honored with His Presence. Are we ready for this? Is anyone?

If you want to understand the phenomenon our English Bibles like to call '*the fear of the LORD*', you must first understand what it is like to host Royalty. When you host royalty *the excitement is through the roof and the possibilities are endless – but the stakes are correspondingly high*. Being in the Presence of Royalty therefore changes everything about us. It changes *the way we think about ourselves and what is going on in the world*. It changes *the way we spend our time*. It changes *the tones in which we speak to one another* as well as *the subject matter of our conversations*. It changes *the way we dress, the way we eat and drink, the way we entertain ourselves*, and even the way we enter and exit a room.

When you are hosting royalty, you see, absolutely everything is focused upon the royal personage you are hosting. What matters is no longer what you as the host want, or like, or think – it is about what the royal personage you are hosting wants, likes, and thinks. The Presence of Royalty calls forth the best, the highest, and the most noble in us. Everything elevates. Even the personal, intimate, and mundane. With regard to every facet of life, hosting royalty calls for an upgrade. And the protocol of upgrade that comes with hosting the highest, most glorious royal personage of all – i.e. the Creator of Heaven and Earth – is what the *Kedusha Discourse* is all about.

It is About to Get Really Personal

Especially if you are new to the study of Torah I should warn you that some of the material in the section of the *Kedusha Discourse* we are about to study may make you uncomfortable. You may get embarrassed. You may even get a little *offended*. Your skin may crawl a bit. And your flesh? Well, do not be too surprised if your flesh lets out a *tortured scream*. These next few parshot, you see, force the serious reader to get *very, very REAL*. In these parshot the Holy One calls upon His Beloved and Betrothed Bride-to-be to climb out of her ivory towers and deal with private, personal, sensitive areas of *real* life 'stuff' in *real* ways and in *real* time. Just remember though, the Book we are reading was not written as a course book for theology students. It was written to serve as a practical guidebook to help real people respond to the Divine Bridegroom's call to become '*holy as He is holy*' and begin to function efficiently and effectively as His Kingdom's Emissaries in

the world.

The Bridegroom's call to 'become holy' is not an end unto itself; our embracing of the protocols of holiness is merely a means to a greater and much more important covenant objective – *i.e.* making *tikkun olam*. Our holiness is not for the benefit of ourselves, our consciences, or our religious/moral pride; it is for the sake of our King's Name, and for the advancement of His Kingdom. It is an integral part of our calling as witnesses – proof-texts, as it were – of how well His Grand Redemptive and Restorative Plan for the world can work if given a chance. After all, if He can cleanse, purify, retrain, act in and through, and glorify US, with all our many and obvious faults and shortcomings – well, is there any person He cannot redeem? Is there any part of Creation that He cannot restore to beauty, to fruitfulness, and to essential purpose and destiny?

The call of the Bridegroom-King to holiness is not therefore a command or law – it is a *prophetic empowerment*. What He *calls us* to become He takes personal responsibility for *equipping and training us* to become. If we truly desire and are committed in our hearts to become the Bride He deserves and longs for - a Bride *without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing*, which comes forth at the appropriate time *dressed in white linen, clean and bright* - well, some pretty heavy helpings of our flesh are going to have to wind up on the cutting room floor in the process.

Not to worry. The Great Physician is also the *Ultimate Surgeon*. He has a scalpel and He is not afraid to use it. He loves us enough to cut away absolutely everything about us that is not 'Bride' material. His blade is sharp, but His Eye is excellent, His skill is well honed, and His Hand is steady. So *let Him do what He needs to do*, Dear Reader. His touch is always healing. His plan is always for good. And even more than He is the Great Physician, He is the *Ultimate Good Shepherd*. He knows exactly where we need to – indeed will have to - go to find the green pastures He has designed for us. He knows every obstacle we have to navigate to get to the still waters He has prepared to nourish us. He knows exactly what paths will - and will not - lead us to righteousness for His Name's sake. He knows exactly where we are going to encounter the presence of our enemies – and He knows how to cause us to thrive even there - and how to lead us through the maze of snares and traps they lay out for us all the way to His House, with goodness and mercy following.

Learning to Recognize And Deal With Life's 'Danger Zones'

It is often said that *life is a journey* – and so it is. We are all just pilgrims and

travelers in this world. From conception to dying breath we are constantly in a state of transition. At times the journey we call life on earth is a casual, methodical one-foot-after-another stroll across open territory and even terrain. But at other times our journey involves crossing *narrow bridges*, navigating *hazardous intersections*, traversing some fairly substantial *stretches of enemy territory*, and passing through some mighty tricky *valleys of the shadow of death*.

The Holy One knows all the 'danger zones'. He knows what potential hazards await us at every crossroads. He knows each and every place, time, and circumstance at which our lives will intersect with the realms of *death*, *distraction* and the *division of loyalties*. And He wants us to walk through all those places, times, and circumstances with undivided hearts, with intact souls, with undiluted priorities, and without the infiltration of *tamei* spirits on 'seek and destroy' missions. That is why He gave us the loving instructions we have recorded in chapters 12 through 15 of the Book most today call 'Leviticus'. Every father, every mother, every child needs to meditate on these chapters - and be prepared to navigate - and help their children and children's children navigate - the dangerous intersections and tough stretches that come with every human being's journey through life. But before we get to the specifics of what the Holy One has to say in these two *parshot* let's pause and remind ourselves once again of where we are in the 'big picture'.

A Quick Refresher

Remember that the primary purpose of the Third Book of Torah is to serve as a *primer on what the Holy One's calling on a person's life is all about*. The Manifest Presence of the Holy One is now dwelling in our midst. And He wants us to make the most of the opportunity. So what He is calling us to do in order to maximize the pleasure of His Company is to *lay aside our inhibitions and agendas* and *draw near to Him*. He wants us to learn to *abide in a state of closeness to Him*. He wants us to get comfortable *walking hand-in-Hand with Him* and making *His voice and His Words the focus of our lives*. Through the Strength we draw from this new level of intimacy with Him He wants to empower us *to start reflecting His holiness for the world to see* – exactly the way He designed and created mankind to do.

This is *the reason we were redeemed*. Getting us out of Egypt was the easy part. The real work of Torah is reshaping us into the Bride He calls us to be. Leviticus is not therefore a list of outdated laws. It is *the genetic blueprint of new creations of God*. It is intended to become a *part of every redeemed person's DNA*. It is a big part of that which is to be "set" [i.e. established permanently] on our hearts, is to be spoken of as we lay down, as we rise up, and as we walk along the way. It is

the protocol we have received from Heaven for the ultimate extreme makeover that the Divine Bridegroom has planned for His Bride. It is to be continually *kept before our eyes* and *bound as a sign upon our hands*. It is to be *inscribed on the doorposts of our houses* and *written on our gates* forever. It is to become second nature to us – like the air we breathe.

The thrilling narratives of Torah are wonderful. Recorded conversations between Moshe, Aharon, Yitro, and others are informative. But what stirs my soul most is when as here in these passages we are treated to the very words that the God of the Universe Himself has spoken. There is something special about all of Scripture. But there is something extra special about Words that *issue forth from the Holy One's very Mouth*. We know that the words He speaks are all *creative, prophetic, important, and eternal*. It is His Voice we are to recognize and *sh'ma*. It is by the Words He speaks that we are to live. *Speak Lord, and your servant will hear*.

Keeping It Real

The main thing the Holy One is going to be talking to us about in the Kedusha Discourse what happens – or at least needs to happen - when we come into contact with creatures, things, situations, and people that the Holy One identifies as sources of ***tumah*** [KJV ‘uncleanness’]. The Holy One knows such contacts are going to occur virtually every day of our lives. Indeed, He orchestrates and choreographs them. He has a plan – not for us to be corrupted by these contacts, but for us to ‘leak’ Majesty *from His Presence*, Holiness *from His Touch*, Healing virtue *from His Spoken Words*, and Wholeness *from His Shalom* into each one of them. But we have to understand that we were created, called, redeemed, and formed into a nation for such an assignment as this. We were made to function as shining lights of *kedusha*, vessels of *honor*, carriers of *glory*, harbingers of *hope*, masters of the arts of *humility, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and love*, pronouncers of *blessing*, breakers of *yokes*, and conduits of *gentleness, goodness, and grace*.

Tumah is the potentially toxic state that results from contact between a human being and any creature, person, thing, or circumstance that Torah calls *tamei*. Whatever is not *tahor* - *i.e. whole, uncompromised, undiluted, unadulterated, undistracted, undivided of heart, God-centered, mission focused, moving toward personal and national destiny*, and healthy to be around - is *tamei*. *Tamei* things and people are *fragmented, fractured of body, soul and/or spirit, divided in loyalty, self- or Human-being obsessed, distracted from priority, emotionally compromised, and corrupted*. *They are on a detour from destiny. They are in real danger of the disintegration of essence. And they are definitely unhealthy to be around.*

There is sometimes a fine line between the realms of the *tahor* and the *tamei*. In the animal kingdom, animals which both part the hoof and chew the cud are *tahor*, but those which do neither, as well as those which do only one of those two things, are sources of *tumah*. In the world of aquatic life, creatures that have both fins and scales are *tahor*, but those that have neither, as well as those that have one of those things but not the other, are *tamei* for us. While they serve legitimate purposes in Creation, they are not only ‘not food’ for us, but we are not even to touch them. If we do, we are crossing a line that is fraught with danger for us – not to mention engaging in flat-out rebellion against the Holy One.

Unfortunately, over time and culture the fine line between the *tamei* and the *tahor* concerning which our Divine Bridegroom in Heaven invests several chapters worth of precious Torah revelation has of late become so blurred in our minds that to some – including most theologians of Christianity – it is now regarded as *inconvenient* and *academic* if not *outdated* and *irrelevant*. The Psalmist however said pretty plainly under the influence of the *Ruach HaQodesh*: ***The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*** Psalm 119:160. And *Yeshayahu* [Isaiah] and *Kefa* [Peter] have both proclaimed: ***“The word of the Holy One endures forever.”*** Isaiah 40:8; I Peter 1:25. Shaul has taught: ***All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*** II Timothy 3:16.

All the teachings of the Holy One – including the Torah’s teaching regarding the *tamei/tahor* distinction – absolutely have to *endure forever*. And since *forever* isn’t by any means *over yet* that means that the distinction between things *tamei* and things *tahor* about which we read so much in Torah absolutely has to still be both very *real* and very *relevant*. Our responsibility is to become as little children at heart and receive these words concerning the lines of distinction between things *tamei* and things *tahor* – as we receive all teachings of Scripture – in *pure faith*. That may mean we have to shed some theologies and doctrines that we have accumulated along the way. But which is more important – A theological position? A doctrine? Or the very Words of the Creator of Heaven and Earth Himself? Consider in this regard the following declarations of the Apostolic Writers themselves, in which they themselves recognize that the issue of uncleanness [*i.e. tumah*] remains very, very real and significant even after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Messiah *Yeshua*. Every time you see the word ‘uncleanness’ in one of these apostolic passages, understand that this means the exact kind of *tumah* about which we read in Leviticus 11 through 15. Here is what Shaul of Tarsus [Paul] has to say in his letter to the Romans.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

*because although they knew God, they did not glorify [Him] as God, nor were thankful,
but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God
into an image made like corruptible man—
and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.
Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts,
to dishonor their bodies among themselves³ ...*

Shaul has not only referenced to the continuing status of *tumah* [KJV ‘uncleanness’] – he has actually described both how it works to its corruption and its natural consequences. To the Corinthians Shaul said:

*Come out from them, and be separate, says the Holy One.
Touch no unclean [Heb. *tamei*] thing and I will receive you.
I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters”,
says the Holy One Almighty.*

*Since we have these promises, dear friends, Let us purify ourselves
from everything that contaminates body and spirit,
perfecting holiness out of reverence for the Holy One⁴.*

Moshe could not have said it better! But Shaul also told the Corinthians:

*I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish,
and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish;
lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath,
selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;
lest when I come again my God will humble me among you,
and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented
of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness they have practiced.*

[II Corinthians 12:20-21]

Notice how to Shaul *tumah* was in the same category as – and created every bit as much a need for making *t’shuvah* [turning back to the Covenant] – as things like fornication and lewdness. Shaul then told the Ephesians:

*... fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you,
as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting,
which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

*For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man,
[nor he] who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and God.*

Let no one deceive you with empty words,

³ The quoted language is from **Romans 1:18-24**.

⁴ This language is quoted from **II Corinthians 6:17 – 7:1**.

*for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

[Ephesians 5:3-7]

To the Ephesians Shaul said it this way:

*“... you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk,
in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened,
being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them,
because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling have given themselves over
to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”*

[Ephesians 4:17-19]

Are you beginning to see how DANGEROUS *tumah* is and will always be to those in Covenant with the Holy One through Messiah Yeshua? But let's not stop yet. Shaul told the Galatians:

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness,
lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish
ambitions, dissensions, heresies envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like;
of which I tell you beforehand just as I also told [you] in time past,
that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God⁵.*

That ‘*will not inherit the kingdom of God*’ warning gets my attention – how about you? Long after the ascension of Messiah Shaul clearly declares the condition Torah calls *tumah* to be right up there with adultery, fornication, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like. So ... maybe, just maybe, we should not ‘blow off’ the *tamei/tahor* distinction the way modern theologians want us to. But we are not done yet. Shaul told the Colossians:

*Therefore put to death your members that are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness,
passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things
the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience*

[Colossians 3:5-6]

And Shaul said to the Thessalonians:

*God did not call us to uncleanness but in holiness.
Therefore he who rejects [this] does not reject man, but God,
who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*

[I Thessalonians 4:7-8]

Dare we consider what Yeshua's dear friend *Sh'mon Kefa* [Peter] – the one He charged so tenderly to ‘feed [His] sheep’ - had to say on the subject? Here it is:

*... the Holy One knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations
and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*

⁵ This quotation is from Galatians 5:19-21.

*and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of **uncleanness** and despise authority. [They are] presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Holy One. But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, [and] will receive the wages of unrighteousness, [as] those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. [They are] spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you ...*

[II Peter 2:9-13]

Shaul and Kefa knew all about what *tumah* [uncleanness], left unchecked, could do to a person, a family, a community, and a nation. They cast such Divine Light that they had often had to deal with outbursts made and violent actions engaged in by persons with *tamei* spirits - what the English translations of the gospels and the Book of Acts call ‘unclean spirits’. Such spirits still exist. Unfortunately, because we have progressively separated ourselves further and further from the brilliant radiance of Torah revelation in the intervening centuries, the Light we who follow Messiah Yeshua emit today is of such low intensity and quality that alas, the *tamei* spirits do not feel threatened, do not cry out when they encounter us, and just keep right on, year after year, inflicting horrendous damage on the souls of men, women and children.

We now are, alas, now functioning more like a collection of ornamental nightlights than the brilliant city set on a hill we were called and Torah prophetically empowered us to be. It is time to reverse the progressive decline. It is time for a generation of followers of Messiah to reconnect with and learn afresh the Torah’s instructions regarding the realms of *tamei* and *tahor*. It is time real men, women and children of the Kingdom learn to apply these critical instructions to our own lives and circumstances in a way that nurtures and deepens the Covenant relationship rather than strains and threatens it. It is time the sons and daughters of the living God get an understanding of *what the tamei and tahor realms consist of, how those realms affect human beings, and what the Holy One wants us to do about it*. We will learn to *acknowledge our dependence* upon the One Whose shining radiance hovers wonderfully over us all, and to *let Him take the role of Bridegroom* and lead us, while we *assume the submissive role of the Bride* and follow Him. So ... if we but consent to follow Him the question becomes “into what realms of experience will He lead us?”

Understanding the 4 Spiritual Realms and Our Responsibility With Respect to Each of Them

In this new level of spiritual reality into which we have entered we have learned

that part of our mission on earth is to *discern between* and *establish our lives as the barriers between* four competing and perfectly balanced spiritual realms – realms that were not heretofore even visible to human eyes in any meaningful way. And then on 1 Nisan in the year after the Exodus - on the day the *Mish'kan* was set up - the radiant Light of the Presence of Holiness Personified entered the Camp and changed the way we looked at everything.

With *increased Light* comes *increased vision*. So when fire fell from Heaven on 8 Nisan, and we entered the bright light of the Holy Fire of the Manifest Presence of the Holy One, it was like *scales fell off of our eyes*. A great number of things that our human eyes had been unable to see before suddenly became very visible. Among the spiritual realities which were unveiled to us in the brilliance of the *Presence Fire* that fell from Heaven were some startling truths concerning the four competing spiritual realms the Holy One had established on earth to keep His Creation in a dynamic state of creative tension. We learned that there are four unseen realms always at work competing for pre-eminence on the earth. Part of the process of *spiritual fission* instituted by the Holy One at Creation, these realms were designed to offset each other perfectly. As in the natural world the realm of Light was on the First Day of Creation separated from and balanced off against the realm of Darkness, so in the spiritual world the realms we will be talking about in parsha *Tazria* were separated and offset against each other by His Word as well. These latter realms are not visible in the natural light of the sun. But in the Radiant Glow of the *Holy One* they begin to come into focus very nicely. And in that Burning and Shining Light we are discovering that just as on the 6th Day of Creation Adam was given dominion over the physical, visible realms of earth, now in connection with the revelation of Sinai we as the covenant people of the Holy One are being *given dominion over and empowered and commissioned to manage the delicate balance between* these four invisible spiritual realms. Believe it or not, this new empowerment and commissioning is *all part of the Holy One's redemptive plan* for His Creation⁶.

The Realm Where Things Kadosh Separate From Things Chol

The first offsetting spiritual realms that we have seen in the Light of the Holy One

⁶ Messiah taught us that the secret to the connection lies *within our hearts*. **Matthew 15:17-20**. By no means however did Messiah thereby do away with the *tamei/tahor* distinction as announced by the Holy One Himself in Torah. All Messiah was addressing in this passage was the mistaken belief of the Pharisees that *a failure to wash hands before eating in a way prescribed not by the Holy One in the Torah but simply by tradition developed by the rabbis* would cause a person to become *tamei/defiled*. His point was that washing hands has ZERO to do with the reality of the *tamei/tahor* distinction.

are the realms of the *kadosh* and the *chol*. The realm of the *chol* consists of things which are at essence man-conceived, man-generated, man-focused, and man-pleasing. The offsetting realm is the realm of the *kadosh*, consisting of things conceived and generated by the Holy One, set apart to and safe in the presence of Him and Him alone.

We learned that these two realms, the *chol* and the *kadosh*, are designed by the Holy One to be perfectly offsetting realms, in constant tension with each other, balancing each other out. And we learned that we – the ‘sons of Yisrael/Ya’akov’⁷ - are intended by the Holy One to be a part of the *kadosh* realm, and are specifically empowered and commissioned to keep the man-conceived, man-generated, man-focused and man-pleasing realm of the *chol* ‘in check’ and under *dominion* at all times.

The Realm Where Things Tahor Diverge From Things Tamei

The two other competing realms normally unseen by unassisted human vision, but visible to us in the Light of His Face, are the realms of the *tamei* and the *tahor*. The realm of the *tamei* is associated with that which brings fragmentation and exudes death. The realm of the *tahor*, on the other hand, is associated with that which brings healing, restoration, and wholeness, and exudes the nurturing milk of life.

While the *Mish’kan* is standing it is primarily the responsibility of the *Aharonic kohanim* to keep the realm of the *chol* properly contained in order that it might not invade or pollute the realm of the *kodesh*, and to keep the realm of the *tamei* in its proper place that it may not invade or pollute the realm of the *tahor*. Leviticus 10:10. Nevertheless we must understand that each of us as the Holy One’s chosen *mamleket kohanim* [kingdom of priests/ambassadors of Heaven], have important roles to play in insuring that the lives we lead provide a buffer zone between the competing spiritual realms, keeping each in its assigned place.

Life On Earth Consists of Things/Circumstances/People that are Tahor, and things/circumstances/people That are Tamei

Modern readers often balk at this portion of Torah. The idea that well-meaning people in covenant with the Holy One can be ‘unclean’ or make other people

⁷ The term in Hebrew is ‘*b’nei Yisrael*’. The author interprets this phrase to refer to the physical descendants of Ya’akov [*i.e.* physical “Israel”] AND to all those descended from other people groups who have been or ever will be engrafted into the covenant the Holy One made with, and choose to follow the lifestyle of, Yisrael’s natural descendants.

‘unclean’ through contact or food intake is to many modern readers regarded as insulting – as *superstitious nonsense*. Modern readers, you see, tend to believe they know more about life than the Creator of life. Hmmmmn. Let’s just consider the possibility that modern readers just might be wrong and that the Holy One just might be right – and explore what, *if* the Holy One is right, becoming *tamei* might mean to us. In connection with last week’s studies we discussed how unfortunate it is that Most English Bibles translate the Hebrew word *tamei* as ‘unclean’ or ‘impure’. The idea is not that human beings become “dirty” or “sinful” by contact with that which is *tamei*. As Yeshua taught us in Matthew 15:17-19, the *tamei/tahor* distinction is not about *cleanliness*. It is more of an internal, spiritual issue than an external, physical one.

The *tahor* state to which we who are betrothed to the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven are called is *much, much more than a matter of good hygiene*. The verb root *tahar* means to *shine brightly – i.e. to cast pure light; to be radiant*. Now you can see the problem with the *tamei* realm – *it contaminates, dulls, and blunts the light we are designed to carry – if not puts it out altogether*. The problem that flows from contact with *tamei* things has is the deleterious effect such contact has upon *the lamp of the soul within us, and the quality light we cast into the world*. So, you ask, how does contact with the *tamei* realm adversely impact the lamp of our soul? What exactly happens to our soul when we come in contact with *death*, or *swine*, or *vultures*, or other intersections where the *forces of life, health, and peace* meet the *forces of death, decay and destruction*? I call the process ‘*fragmentation*’. Each time we enter an *intersection* where the *forces of life, health, and peace* meet the *forces of death, decay and destruction*, our souls are in danger of becoming *confused* and *conflicted* about the direction we desire to go. Before we entered the intersection we were wholeheartedly devoted to the Plan of the Holy One. Once we reach the crossroads and see two pathways diverge before our eyes, however, we suddenly are not so single-minded. Our fallen natures are always fascinated with the realm of death, decay and destruction. And to the extent we surrender to the fascination of our fallen natures, our soul loses its wholehearted devotion upon the way of life, health and peace to which we are called, and becomes fragmented, distracted, conflicted. If we let this process go far enough, we become *bipolar* and *schizophrenic*.

The *tamei* state operates somewhat like the dust *cloud that goes wherever the Charles Schultz character ‘Pig-Pen’, from the Charlie Brown comic strips*. It encompasses us and creates a barrier between us and Divine Illumination. Shrouding us in a fog, it prevents the shafts of pure Divine light the Holy One is constantly sending to us from reaching the soul intact and providing the level of

nourishment we need to overcome the animalistic aspects of humanity. An undernourished soul is easily overcome by and engulfed in the animal urges and appetites of the human animal. When the animalistic aspect of our humanity reigns, we become a slave to base inclinations.

To understand the consequences of this it helps to look at the ‘gospel’ accounts of Messiah’s ministry at his first advent. Do you remember the Master confronting and dealing with something our English Bibles refer to as ‘unclean spirits’?⁸ In Hebrew, the word our English Bibles translate as ‘unclean’ would be *tamei*. Now do you get it? Do you now understand why the ‘unclean spirits’ in the man of Gadara begged the Master not to send them into the deep [a *tahor* place], but instead into a herd of swine [amidst *tamei* creatures of the same nature as them]⁹. Luke 8:31-32. Do you now understand that although *tamei* status oft-times has physical manifestations [*i.e.* symptoms] it *is* and *always remains* a primarily *spiritual* condition? Do you now understand why contact with any of the things which the Holy One created and established as part of the *tamei* realm places us in a state of *spiritual transition* which makes getting out of our routine and paying extremely close attention to, and following, the Holy One’s instructions, very, very important to our spiritual well-being. For a human being any encounter with the *tamei* state – whatever its source – calls for a state of high spiritual alert. Such encounters require enhanced security measures, and the exercise of extreme vigilance. Major issues hang precariously in the balance. “Business as usual” is not an option.

A Classic Example of Tahor/Tamei Interaction: Chava and the Serpent in Gan Eden

Consider the first contact between the human species and the realm of the *tamei*. It happened in *Gan Eden* [the Garden of Eden]. The *tamei* creature was the Serpent. Note that in that instance sin did not *automatically* result from contact between the humans and the Serpent. Had the human being continued to *sh’ma* the Holy One’s instructions and seek His counsel and value His words over the “counsel” of the Serpent, sin would never have entered the picture. *Tamei* is thus not synonymous with, nor necessarily indicative of, sin. What it is, instead, is a state crying out for *extreme vigilance* – somewhat like the ‘terror alert’ warning system in place in America since September 11, 2001.

Back to the Garden: *Chava* [Eve], the mother of all living, did not when she came

⁸ See Mark 1:26, 3:30, 5:2 ff, and 7:25ff, Luke 4:33, 8:29, and 9:37-42.

⁹ The Master was the *Light of the World*, so in the presence of the Divine Light he emitted *tamei* spirits were revealed for what they were. Knowing they were exposed, they cried out and manifested.

in contact with the *tamei* creature go on a state of enhanced vigilance. She instead approached contact with the *tamei* creature *casually*. She *bantered* with him. She listened with interest to his *irreverent sarcasm*. She tolerated without objecting to his *rasping negativity*. She considered what he said to her, and decided to ‘check it out’ on her own. She did not *cling to* and *value* the words the Holy One had spoken to her. She allowed the Serpent’s brazen subtleness to “*tweak*” her *fleshly desires* and *skew her focus*. She allowed him to shift her attention away from the vast storehouse of things with which she and Adam had been abundantly blessed by reason of their unique intimacy with the Holy One to the one and only thing in all of Creation which the Holy One had warned her to avoid. She thereby stepped smack dab into *a crisis of trust* in the Holy One’s goodness.

Merely coming in contact with the Serpent did not, as aforesaid, make Adam and Chava sinful. One can come in contact with the *tamei* realm, and remain sinless. But the contact Adam and Chava had with the Serpent [the representative of the *tamei* realm] did place them in a *spiritual* condition in which extraordinary vigilance was appropriate. That call to extraordinary vigilance is what the status of *tamei* is all about.

Navigating the Danger Zones of Life

Everything the Holy One labels as *tamei*, you see, constitutes a portal – a point of contact, or intersection, between the spiritual worlds of light and darkness, and hence life and death. That which is *tamei* is a “*danger zone*” – an object, a thing, a place, a condition, or a circumstance where the spiritual dimensions of light and darkness overlap each other, and where spiritual worlds we cannot see with natural eyes bump into each other. How a human being responds/reacts when confronted with such a portal is very important. Depending on how the human being navigates at the point of intersection, the portal that intersection provides **may** lead the human away from the Holy One (the way it did with Chava) – or may bring the human closer than ever to the Holy One (the way the Holy One intended).

Did you catch that? What our inevitable interactions with the *tamei* realm are actually intended to be are *opportunities to ADVANCE and ENHANCE our spiritual lives and actually deepen our covenant relationship with the Holy One*. The Holy One wants us to navigate successfully through the spiritual ‘danger zones’ of life - by learning to *sh’ma* His Voice. The Holy One has therefore seen fit to take whole chapters of His Torah to let us know:

- [1] where the portals that mark the collision of spiritual worlds are,
- [2] that coming in contact with at least some of them is inevitable, and
- [3] how we can navigate around them successfully.

Remember Noach and those ‘Other’ Animals

As you will recall, when Noach was instructed to receive animals into the ark, the Holy One told him to receive into the ark seven of some kinds of animals (those which were characterized as *tahor*), but only two [one pair] of other kinds of animals. The ‘other’ kind of animals – those as to which only one pair was to accompany Noach - were then characterized only as *lo tahor*. In last week’s parsha we learned to call these animals *tamei*. See **Genesis 7:1-2; cf. Leviticus 11**. They included things like pigs, horses, camels, rabbits, squirrels, eagles, ostriches, as well as shellfish, frogs, serpents/snakes, and most bugs. Please note therefore that the distinction between *tamei* and *tahor* existed, and mattered to the Holy One, prior to the institution of the Aharonic priesthood or the “Tabernacle ritual”, and involves principles that are of *eternal and continuing relevance* to all the Holy One’s people, of whatever nation. After all, we are all descended from Noach, whether Jew or Gentile.

The distinction in the animals survived the flood. See **Genesis 8:10**. And I personally believe – though I recognize it is not a popular position today – that the distinctions set forth in Torah between *tamei* and *tahor* also survived the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua, and the destruction of the Temple by Titus in c. 70 C.E., and are still relevant for all descendants of Chava and Noach today – be they Jew or Gentile. *A portal is a portal*, Dear Reader. Spiritual reality is eternal. We can put our heads in the sand – or a book of theology – and ignore it if we choose ... but *we cannot make it go away*.

A Brief Look at the Haftarah

II Kings 4:42 – 5:27

The haftarah associated with parsha *Tazria* comes from II Kings 4 and 5. This section from the book of the prophets introduces us to the Eliyahu’s successor, *Elishahu [Elisha]*. As you will recall, when Eliyahu was received into Heaven, his servant Elisha received his mantle, and with it a ‘double portion’ of the prophetic anointing that had been upon Eliyahu. The chronicles of Eliyahu’s ministry record his participation in 7 miracles of the Holy One; the chronicles of Elisha’s ministry will record his participation in exactly twice that amount, 14 miracles of the Holy One.

We will read of Elisha’s participation in the Holy One’s miraculous feeding of 100 men with 20 small barley loaves and a few fresh ears of barley grain. For talmidim of Yeshua, this supernatural feeding event is extremely significant, as it provided the Biblical precedent for Yeshua’s famous “feeding of the 5,000”.

The Apostolic Scripture Readings for the Week

Luke 2:21-39

The suggested reading from the apostolic writings this week is Luke 2:21-36. This describes what happened on the eighth and fortieth days of Yeshua's life. Yosef and Miryam left their home and traveled to the Temple at Jerusalem. The purpose of their journey was to walk out the teachings of the Kedusha Discourse of Torah. According to the protocol established in parsha Tazria they went to make *korban tazria zachar* at the brazen altar of the Temple, present their firstborn son to the Priest, and perform 'all things according to the law of the Holy One'. [Luke 2:22-23, 29; referencing the protocol set out in Exodus 13:2, 12, & 15 and Leviticus 12:8].

It was in the context of this visit to Jerusalem that the parents of young Yeshua of Natzret received blessings and prophetic words from Sh'mon [called Simeon in English Bibles] and from Chana [called Anna in English Bibles], the octogenarian prophetess of the tribe of Asher. Sh'mon saw the child and declared: ***A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.*** Chanah gave thanks to the Holy One and began to speak of this very special child to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

*May you know the beauty of relating to the Holy One
the way Adam as Chava did in the Garden before the Fall,
and as Sh'mon and Chanah did at the Temple.*

The Rabbi's son

Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week of Parsha Tazria

The First Petition: Da'at – Intimate Knowledge/Understanding

Atah chanen l'adam da'at

You graciously give man intimate knowledge and deep understanding

u'm'lamed l'enosh binah

and teach mortal men wisdom

Chaneinu mayiteicha da'at, binah, v'haskel

*Generously endow us with Your understanding,
wisdom, and discernment*

Baruch atah Adonai chanen ha-da'at

Blessed are You, O Holy One, Who gives understanding