

Introduction to Parshot #s 27-28: Tazria and Metzora¹

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

READINGS: ***Torah Metzora:*** Leviticus 14:1 –15:33
 Haftarah: II Kings 7:3-9; Malachi 4:1-6
 B’rit Chadasha: Romans 6:19-23



When a woman conceives seed and births a new male life

This Week’s Amidah Prayer Focus is the 1st Petition – Da’at

Vayedaber Adonai el-Moshe l’emor – Then 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 man-child **Leviticus 12:1-2a.**

On the 8th day of Nisan/Aviv in the year following the Exodus – the great day of the inauguration of the Tabernacle - the Holy One delivered the longest uninterrupted download of Divine Utterance in recorded history. I call this outpouring the ‘*Kedusha Discourse*’. In this critical section of Torah the Creator trains us in the delicate work of bringing the transformative energy of His Presence and His *Wholeness-restoring Ways* to bear upon the darkness-infested households, ethnicities, cultures, institutions and ideologies of earth. What we read these next three weeks will teach us [a] *who we are created to be* and [b] *how we are to go about our assigned task of bringing Beauty, Wholeness, Health, Hope, and Holiness back into the fallen world*. Stated generally, our assignment seems simple: *sh’ma, sh’mar, memorize, meditate, discuss, and asah* – then go forth into all the world

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calmly and joyfully modeling these disciplines to the nations. But, as always, Kingdom assignments are never as simple as they seem. As Nadav and Avihu recently found out, we are going to need a whole lot more detail. The Holy One has us covered – that detail is provided ... in the Kedusha Discourse.

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 on our Camp, business-as-usual is out of the question. We are now *Hosting Royalty*. We are being honored with His Presence. Self-will, sensual/sexual/sentimental/pseudo-intellectual self-promotion are off the agenda. Politics and ideology are suddenly irrelevant. Interpersonal offense and drama are long forgotten. Our eyes have seen the King! He has brought us into His chambers – and as we see Him enthroned in majesty before us our spikenard cannot help but release its fragrance. We are all Mary of Bethany, breaking our alabaster box open, and pouring it on His Feet.

This is a season for the *Fear of the Holy One*. If you want to understand this phenomenon, you need to first understand what it is like to host Royalty. When a person or a village hosts royalty, *the excitement is through the roof and the possibilities are endless – but the stakes are correspondingly high*. Being in the Presence of Royalty changes everything about us. It changes *the way we think about ourselves – and how we view/interpret what is going on in the world*. It changes *the way we choose to spend our time, our money, our energy, and our opportunities of influence*. It changes *the tones in which we speak to one another. It even changes the subject matter of our conversations*. Some topics of conversation, and some modes of communication, are simply not worthy of a household that is hosting royalty. The presence of majesty in our midst changes *the way we choose to dress, the menu from which we choose to eat and drink, the way we entertain ourselves, the reason for which we believe we are alive, and the way we interact with everyone within our spheres of influence/zones of impact*.

When hosting royalty, you see, absolutely everything becomes focused upon the royal personage being hosted. 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 the Universe – is what the *Kedusha Discourse* is all about.

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* [Genesis] and in the first half of *Sefer Sh'mot* [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 suddenly 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

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].

we are allowed to occupy? Of course, even 'steering clear' is not 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* [i.e. 'clean'] again, and [b] to recapture the majesty, beauty, wisdom, and glory of the holy realm.

***If We Just Let the Holy One's Presence and Words Combine to
Remake Us Into 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***

The Holy One's prime concern is not, as some might desire, what happens to us – and where we go - when we die; that is a concern for short-sighted theologians, not cross-generation Kingdom-Builders. What the Holy One has on His mind is the here and now – and how we impact His Creation, our bloodlines and the bloodlines of others, and the people and places that matter to us most. He wants our focus to be on becoming the best 'us' we can be, individually and collectively. He wants us to learn to abide in Him and walk with Him; to take on His attributes and absorb His *kedusha* [holiness] and *tahorah* [wholeness]; and to bring those things into the mundane affairs of life – eating, drinking, dressing, interacting with others, working, and passing time. 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 Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover is About to Get Really Personal

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 drop all pretenses of piety and spiritual elitism and 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; it is merely a means to a greater and much more important covenant objective – namely co-laboring with the Holy One in 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 Honor - and for the advancement of His Kingdom. It is an integral part of our calling as witnesses; proof positive of how well His Grand Redemptive and Restorative Plan for the world can work if it is only given a chance. After all, if the Holy One can cleanse, purify, retrain, act in and through, and glorify US - with all our many and obvious faults and shortcomings ... well, if He can do that, is there any person or situation 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*. Everything 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 the premise under which we have been proceeding - i.e. that the Book of Leviticus is designed 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.

Remember Noach and those 'Other' Species – of Which Only Two – Not Seven - Were Taken?

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 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*. Spiritual reality is eternal. We can put our heads in the sand – or hide them in a book of theology – and ignore the truth if we choose ... but *we cannot make it go away*.

Understanding the 4 Spiritual Realms and Our Responsibility with Respect to Each

On 1 Nisan in the year after the Exodus - 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*. And so it was that in the bright light of the Holy Fire of the Manifest Presence of the Holy One a great number of things that our human eyes had been unable to see before suddenly became very visible. It was like *scales fell off of our eyes*. It was as if *a veil had been removed from our faces*. Among the spiritual realities which were unveiled to us that day 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 in the brilliant the light of the *Presence of the Holy One* 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 parshot *Tazria* and *Metzora* 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 Creation³. We also learned that a critical aspect of our mission on earth going forward is going to be to *discern 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.

³ 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.

The Realm Where Things Kadesh Separate From Things Chol

The first offsetting spiritual realms that we have seen in the Light of the Holy One are the realms of the *kadesh* 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 *kadesh*, 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 *kadesh*, 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*’⁴ - are intended by the Holy One to be a part of the *kadesh* 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.

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

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

⁴ 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.

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. But what if the Holy One is right. What if us becoming *tamei* actually has consequences - to us, to our families and households, to our spheres of influence, and to our world. We discussed in connection with last week's studies 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 problem that flows from contact with *tamei* things has very little to do with how that contact affects the *outside* of us. Instead, the problem that results from contact with the *tamei* realm flows from the deleterious effect such contact has upon *the soul within us*. So, you ask, how does contact with the *tamei* realm adversely impact 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’?⁵ 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]⁶. **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.

The Tazria and Metzora Download - A Quick Look At What Lies Ahead

Last week we learned that human beings can actually be brought into an endangered stated Torah calls *tamei* by either *eating the flesh of* or *getting too close to and touching* certain living creatures – predators, carrion-eaters, bottom-feeders etc. Some creatures of earth, you see, have been so adversely impacted by the Fall, and by fallen mankind failing to ‘take dominion’ over Creation the way he was created to, that they are now part of a dark, violent ‘dog-eat-dog’ realm that we are not ever supposed to either be part of or get comfortable with. They are of one realm – we belong to another. We are not to raise these creatures – or consider them as ‘pleasant to look at’, as ‘good for food’, or ‘good to make one wise’. **Contrast the mind games Chava played in Genesis 3:6a, that led to the great rebellion of Genesis 3:6b**. No experimentation. No exceptions. No compromises. No excuses.

We are about to discover that *Sh’mini*’s initial discourse on the realms of *tahor* and *tamei* in relation to living creatures was merely *the tip of a great iceberg*. This week 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

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

⁶ 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.

participation in an appropriate tikkun/restoration protocol. The Holy One wants us to know that 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, as Rabbi Yeshua taught, the *tamei* status comes primarily *from within*. A man's thoughts, ideas, worldviews, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and moods can bear the marks – and carry the toxicity – of *tumah* every bit as effectively as a pig or a serpent. 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*. Ah, but we will get to all of that in time. In the meantime, here are some examples of human activities that introduce *tumah* – or at least the potential for the development of *tumah* – into the camp of the Redeemed:

- *Negative, critical, or wounding words* that issue forth from our mouths;
- the emotions and bodily processes that accompany the *conception of a child*;
- The pain and out-of-sorts feelings that accompany the *menstrual flow* of a woman of childbearing age;
- The sensations and passions that accompany the *seminal discharge* of a man;
- the pain and fear that grips a woman in the throes of labor – and a man whose wife is going through that process;
- the emotions that accompany the release of *blood and spent tissue that* issues forth in connection with childbirth;
- the angst and embarrassment that accompany 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.

Additionally, the Holy One will teach us how to recognize and deal with outbreaks of toxic levels of *tumah* in our own bodies and households. We will learn how we are to treat a person with *tzara'at* – and even more importantly, how we can help that person be restored to a *tahor* condition. Hopefully, in the process, we will learn:

1. to recognize '*tumah*' [KJV uncleanness] and its potentially harmful effects for sons and daughters of the Covenant' and all their assigned spheres of

- influence;
2. how to stem the flow of, and effectively neutralize, *tumah* once it has been identified; and
 3. how to become agents of *tahorah* [wholeness] in a world where *tumah* runs rampant and sucks the life out of everything it touches.

Here is a little joke to kick off the discussion:

Question: Rabbi, what's the difference between *tumah* and a tumor?

Answer: A tumor, my son, is usually benign.

You see, Beloved, 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 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.

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.

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. The message is clear: 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 *tumah* remains very, very real and significant even after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Messiah. 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 themselves⁷ ...

Shaul has not only referenced to the continuing status of *tumah* – 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 [i.e. 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 One⁸.

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 *teshuvah* [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, 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,

⁷ The quoted language is from **Romans 1:18-24**.

⁸ This language is quoted from **II Corinthians 6:17 – 7:1**.

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 God⁹.

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 we should not ‘blow off’ the *tamei/tahor* distinction the way modern Christian theologians seem to want us to. As 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]

Shaul also 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/Kadosh Breath.

[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, 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.

⁹ This quotation is from Galatians 5:19-21.

*[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?*"

Why We Are Called to Separate –and Maintain a Boundary – Between that Which is Tahor and that Which Is Tamei

We will learn this week the unpleasant reality that we ourselves can be – and often are - carriers and communicants of *tamei* status. If you recall what that means, you know that it means that 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. And we will also learn, if we *sh'ma* the Voice of the Holy One, that this is exactly the way the Holy One intended it to be.

We will learn the truth that *being privileged to be counted as one of the Holy One's people* is not just about *going to Heaven* as opposed to *going to Hell*. We will learn as well that being one of the Holy One's chosen is not just about leading or participating worship services or planning, administrating, or engaging in ministry activities. Indeed, we are going to discover that however 'holy' one may try to be, becoming *tamei* from time to time is more or less an inevitable part of the human existence.

We will learn that *tamei* status is a *universal experience*. And we will come to grips with that fact. We will learn, you see, that becoming *tamei* is *not the end of the world*. We will learn that becoming *tamei* merely means we have come in contact with something – some creature, some life circumstance – or have issued forth something from within ourselves - that has the potential to disturb and threaten the *tahor* [whole, uncompromised, undistracted, undivided in loyalties, God-centered, moving toward destiny] state in which we who are the Holy One's are called to spend most of our lives. We are, after all, *hosting Royalty*. What did not seem like a big deal before the Royal Personage arrived in our midst now just will not do at all. Now it is essential for us to understand not only what it means to be *tamei* but how to deal with it. The Divine Bridegroom's plan for us, you see, is to train us to see the *tamei* status not as a *curse* but as *a springboard to a new and higher level of spiritual life and to a deeper level of trust in and intimacy with our Divine Bridegroom*.

The Encroaching Nature of the Realm of the Tamei, and Its Effect Upon the Lives of the Holy One's People

Even though we are the Holy One's covenant people, and even though we are ransomed, redeemed, and re-created as *tahor* men and women, we do not by any means live in a *tahor* bubble where wholeness and life are all we ever experience. 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 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. Our assignment is to ascend into the Beauty Realm daily, and absorb, and bring back to earth, and expose our spheres of influence to, our King's infectious *tahorah* – *i.e.* the purifying energy of His wholeness.

Alas, when - as at present - there is no supernatural fire on any physical altar to illuminate the spiritual realities surrounding us, we almost never sense the affect the

tamei realm is having on us and our world. But it is having an effect, 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*, we will tend to let the insults associated with those encroachments accumulate and aggregate. And 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.

A Tazria Travelogue

Here is an outline of parsha *Tazria*:

- I. The Case of the *Tazria* – *i.e.* a woman who carries the seed of new life
 - A. If the new life exhibits 'male' gender signs – *zakar*
 - B. if the new life exhibits 'female' gender signs – *nakabah*
- II. The *Korbanot Protocols of New Life Celebrations/Dedications*
- III. Introduction to *Nega-Tzara'at* and Its Associated *Tahor-ing Protocols*
 - A. As *nega-tzara'at* manifests in and affects human skin;
 1. the swelling eruption – Hebrew *se'et*;
 2. the sunken lesion/scab – Hebrew *sapachat*;
 3. the discolored 'spot' – Hebrew *boheret*;
 4. the blemish of raw flesh – Hebrew *basar chai*
 5. the 'boil' – Hebrew, *sh'chin*
 6. the flare-up of burning/chaffing – Hebrew *mikvat-esh*;
 - B. As *nega-tzara'at* manifests in and affects garments;
 1. Garments of Linen;
 2. Garments of Wool

A Metzora Travelogue

After *Tazria* concludes we will begin to explore the protocols of *Tahorah* a little deeper, with *Torat-ha-Metzora* – the ‘laws of the Leper’. A brief outline of that short parsha is:

I. The Taharing Protocols for *Metzorim* (i.e. ‘lepers’) [14:1-32]

- A. *The Plan for all Metzorim to be Made Whole & Restored*
- B. *The Intimate Friendship and Selfless Service of the Kohen*

- 1. *The First Day Protocols*
- 2. *The Six Days of Re-Entry*
- 3. *The Seventh-Day Protocols*
- 4. *The Eighth-Day Protocols*

II. *Tzara’at* as it Manifests in Houses [14:33-43]

III. The Taharing Protocols for Bodily Emissions and Discharges

- A. *Zuv b’Mib’shar - A male’s discharge from the flesh [15:1-15]*
- B. *Shikvat Zera – release of semen [15:16-18]*
- C. *Zavah Dam – a woman’s monthly uterus cleansing cycle [15:19-25]*
- D. *Zov Damah Yomim Rabim – an unnatural flow of blood [15:26-30]*

IV. The Torah of Quarantine [15:31-33]

The emphasis of the two-chapter segment of the *Kedusha* Discourse will be on empowering us to recognize, isolate, and rid ourselves – as well as the houses in which we live - of one of the most intense and toxic states of *tumah* a person can experience in this life – i.e. *tzara’at*. The condition our English Bibles translate as ‘leprosy’ is simply an oozing, active, toxic discharge of *tumah*. *Tzara’at* involves a dangerously high level of acute and destructive *tumah*.

The focus will be upon THE PROTOCOLS BY WHICH ALL THOSE WITH TUMAH – INCLUDING THE METZORA – CAN BE *TAHAR-ED*, OR MADE WHOLE. When our studies in *Metzora* are over we will find ourselves totally in awe of the Holy One’s kindness and goodness – for this parsha reveals as much as any in Torah how He always has in mind, and is constantly at work leading us to and through a recovery strategy. He always has a course correction mapped out to offset every course deviation we can dream up. He always has a plan of healing that will

cause every seemingly impossible situation we can create to culminate in joyful celebration.

A Brief Look at the Haftarah

II Kings 4:42 – 5:27; II Kings 7:3-20 & Malachi 4:1-6

The haftarah for *Tazria* comes from II Kings 4 and 5. This haftarah will introduce us to the prophet Elisha, the successor to Eliyahu. 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 of Natzret, this supernatural feeding event is extremely significant, as it provided the Biblical precedent for, and taught the significance of, Yeshua’s participation in the “feeding of the 5000”.

The haftarah readings for *Metzora* begins in II Kings 7. The setting for the story is the city of Samaria, capital of the ‘Northern Kingdom’ of Israel. The King of the Northern Kingdom is *Y’horam*¹⁰ [Jehoram] son of Ahab, who did evil in the sight of the Holy One. **II Kings 3:1**. While Y’horam ruled the Northern Kingdom, a military crisis arose which threatened the very survival of his nation. Ben-Hadad, the king of neighboring Syria, amassed a great army, invaded the land, and besieged Samaria. As the siege continued, food became very scarce inside the city. The author of Bible portrays the depth of the crisis vividly as follows: *... a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings brought five shekels of silver.* **II Kings 6:25**.

The main human characters of the passage we will read will be four men with *tzara’at* who had, prior to the siege, sat in the gate of Samaria, begging for food. These men were some of the first – and worst – affected by the siege. What, they wondered to themselves, would they do to survive? No one had alms to give them. Even if they were given the usual small amounts of silver, the price of what little food was left in the city was so high there was no way they could purchase enough to sustain them. So, they weighed their options and decided: *... let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us - well, we are going to die anyway.* **II Kings 7:4**. And so, as darkness fell, four desperate and sickly men

¹⁰ *Y’horam*, spelled *yod, hey, cholem vav, resh, mem sofit*, means ‘Yah arises’, or “Yah is exalted”.

walked away from everything they had ever known – and headed fearfully into the camp of the Syrians. What they found – and what they did – when they got there is the subject of our readings.

We will conclude our readings from the prophets this week with Malachi 4. We will receive inspiration and hope from the promise of a future day when “*the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings*”; when we will go forth leaping and dancing “*as calves released from the stall*”, and when the Holy One will send Eliyahu to us again to “*turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers*”.

An Overview of the Apostolic Scripture Readings for the Week

Luke 2:21-39; Romans 6:19-23; Romans 1:24-32;

This week’s first suggested reading from the apostolic writings is Luke 2:21-36. This passage 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.

The second B’rit Chadasha reading this week is taken from the 6th chapter of Shaul of Tarsus’ letter to the Romans. Shaul, a Hebrew of Hebrews, will speak to the people of Rome in whose homes he hopes to visit concerning the process by which followers of Yeshua become *kedoshim* [holy ones, saints]. Shaul will liken the process of sanctification for followers of Messiah to ‘the torah of the *Metzora*’ we will read about in the second parsha of the week. As the Holy One teaches us in the Torah that every body-part of the *metzora* affected by *tzara’at* has to be voluntarily submitted to the priest for inspection and “cleansing” to be made *tahor*, Shaul will teach us that, in the same manner, every part of our body which we have used for [a] things that our Divine Bridegroom has declared to be *tamei*, and [b] “wickedness”, is to be voluntarily submitted to the Holy One, and surrendered to Him to use in redemptive

acts [*mitzvot*] that will make us *tahor* – i.e. fitting agents of the King’s *shalom*.

May you know the beauty of relating to the Holy One the way Adam and 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

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

Atah chanen l’adam da’at

You graciously give man intimate knowledge and deep understanding

um’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.