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The Test of Tsara’at
13: 1-59

Tsara’at is a general term for **skin diseases**, which could include **boils (to see link click Bz), burns (**see **Ca), head sores (**see **Cb), white spots (**see **Cc), sores on bald spots (**see **Cd), stains (**see **Ce),** or **mildew (Cf).** The term **m’tsora** is translated **leprosy** and will be covered separately (see **Cg**). **Beginning with the previous Torah portion** (see **Bc – On the Eighth Day**)**, and continuing with this one, we have been examining the concepts of being ritually clean and ritually unclean in terms of what they can teach us about two kingdoms: the kingdom of sin and death** (here in **The Test of Tsara’at**), and **the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness** (see **Cg – The Test of M’tsora**). Now let me offer some biblical proof for these **two kingdoms** and explain **them** in greater detail.



The kingdom of sin and death: For the purposes of our discussion about the two kingdoms, we will begin with the text of **Romans Chapter Five** (see the commentary on **Romans Bl – Midrash on Adam**). In **verses 12-21**, we find a remarkable contrast between two realms of spiritual existence. The first hint that these realms of spiritual experience are, in reality, two separate kingdoms is in

Romans 5:14 which describes **death** as **reigning from Adam** (see **Romans Bm – The Consequences of Adam**). Where something **reigns**, there is **a kingdom**! We call this particular **kingdom . . . the kingdom of sin and death** because **verse 14** says that **death reigned,** and **it** is **sin** that causes **death**.

Continuing with the description of this **kingdom of sin and death**, we find that this passage describes a spiritual progression which looks something like this: **Adam sinned**, that **sin** infected **his** whole body from head to toe, nothing escaped its **deathly** affect, condemning all in **Adam**, and ending with **death** to all in **Adam**. That disease of **sin** became part of **his** spiritual DNA, so to speak, and was subsequently passed on to all of **his** descendants. **All**, therefore, became **sinners**. **Isaiah** said: **All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6a). Jeremiah** declared **that the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 19:9a).** And **Paul** summed it up this way: **For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).**

This **sin**, because **it** reflects a basic, deep-seated rebellion against **YHVH** and **His Torah**, brought **condemnation (Romans 5:18)** to **all** who **sinned**. **The sinners** were condemned by **the Judge** of all mankind to die, both spiritually and physically (see the commentary on **Revelation Fo – The Great White Throne Judgment**). Since **all** who are in **Adam** have **sin** resulting in **death**, we can say that **death reigned (Romans 5:14)** throughout all mankind. Hence, **the kingdom of sin and death** is characterized by the three parts in the sequence described above: **sin**, **condemnation**, and **death.** Let us comment further on each of these.

Sin: There are several Hebrew words behind the English word **sin** in **the Torah**. One of the most significant is from the root *'avah*, particularly the noun, *'avon*. The root meaning is *bend, twist,* or *distort.* Hence, this word for sin seems to stress the fact that sin is an *infraction, crooked behavior,* or *perversion* of **the righteousness** which so characterizes **ADONAI**. To the ancient Israelites, it was a comfort to know that the atoning sacrifice of **a goat** at **Yom Kippur bore on itself all their punishment** (Hebrew: *'avon*)**.**

Another significant word for **sin** in **the Torah** is the word *chatta*. The basic meaning of the root is *to miss the mark* or *way* (see **Al – The Purification Offering: Purified by the Blood**). One reason why *chatta* is an important word for **sin**, especially in **the Torah**, is that it's the opposite of the root word for *torah* which literally means *direction or instruction.* In other words, the basic meaning of this

word is *to hit the mark.* **Sin,** on the other hand, especially when represented by the word *chatta*, means *to miss the mark*.[199]

Therefore, when a person sins, he perverts the witness of who the real **YHVH** is and *misses the mark* of living **God's righteousness**. These attributes are exactly opposite of those which **Elohim** created mankind to possess. **He** created mankind to be in **His image**. One of the implications of this is that when we live, we are to be like living mirrors to the creation around us of what **the LORD** is like. **Sin** perverted this witness. In addition, Adam and Eve were originally created to mimic **God** in their lives. **Sin** caused them to *miss the mark* of how accurate they would have been in living out **His righteousness**.

Condemnation: In light of what **sin** is and what **it** has done to pervert and distort the witness of **God** on this earth, it is little wonder why **Ha'Shem** had to condemn man for his **sin**. After all, it was a basic affront to **Him** and **His** sovereignty. **ADONAI** originally designed mankind to live absolutely dependent on **Him**. In that way, mankind would accurately portray who **YHVH** was in creation. Instead, however, man's **sin** amounted to a rebellion against **the LORD's** rule and reign. In his **sin**, man essentially asserted that he – instead of **ADONAI** – knew best how to live his life. There is only one thing a perfectly just and righteous **God** can do in such a case – legally condemn **sin**. Thus, we read: **As the TaNaKh puts it, "There is no one righteous, not even one! No one understands, no one seeks God, all have turned away and at the same time become useless; there is no one who shows kindness, not a single one (Romans 3:10-12; Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3)!**

Death: Therefore, **Ha'Shem** rightfully declares that **the wages** (what we earn for our **sin**) **of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Death** is the sentence passed on from the holy courtroom for the punishment which condemned **sinners** must face. **Death** is essentially a separation. Dr. Francis Schaeffer skillfully observes several kinds of separation which occurred because of sin entering into the world and spreading to all mankind. **There are four points of separation.**

> **First, there is separation between God and mankind.** This is the most far-reaching separation because man no longer has the communion with **YHVH** that he was meant to have. Therefore, he cannot fulfill the purpose of his existence.[200]
>
> **Second, there is separation of man from himself.** Man's basic psychosis,

or hang-up, is his separation from **God** carried into his own personality as a separation from himself. Therefore, we have self-deception.[201]

Third, there is separation of man from man. This includes a division between man and his wife, his family, and other relatives. It also includes a man being separated from other human beings. A gigantic sociological problem confronts mankind everywhere without **God**.

Fourth, there is separation of man from nature. Man has lost his full dominion over nature as a result of **Adam's sin** in the garden, and the result is that now nature itself is often the means of judgment.[202]

In all these examples of separation, Schaeffer would agree that **a death** occurred. When people cannot experience the life flow from **ADONAI**, which hinders him from bearing life in all of his relationships, there is **death**. The ultimate **death** on the *physical* level is when man's body ceases to function and he **dies**. The ultimate **death** on the *spiritual* level is an eternal separation from the fellowship and presence of **the Creator Himself**.[203]