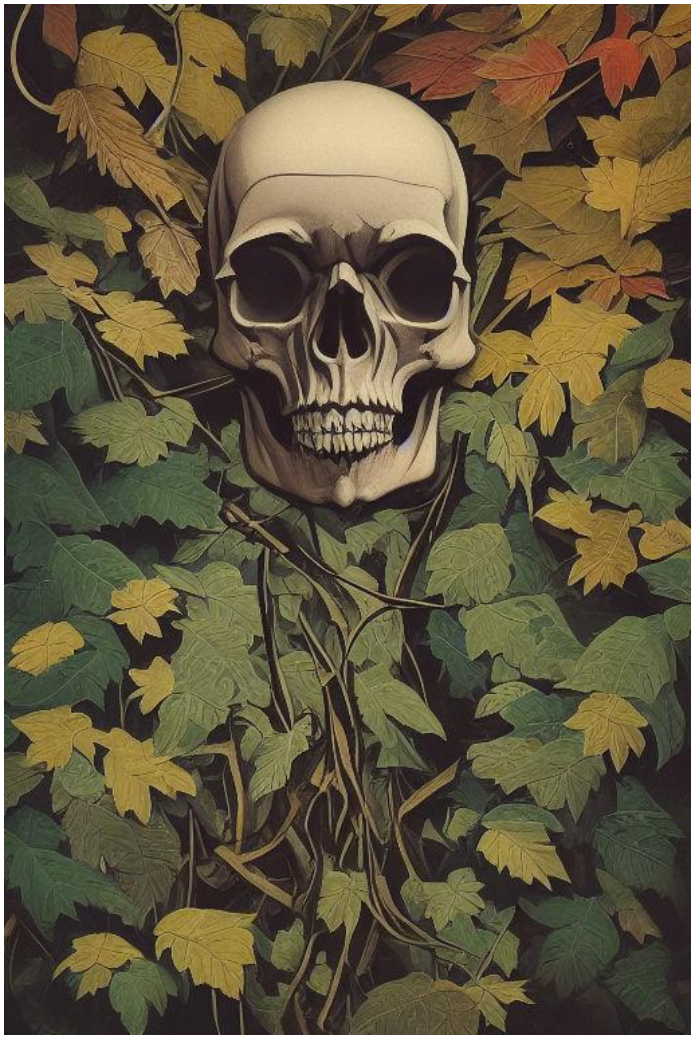
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The Treatment of Tsara’at Clothing
13: 47-59

The Treatment of Tsara’at Clothing DIG: What was the purpose of teaching the concepts of being ritually clean and ritually unclean? How did God use tsara’at as an example of the holiness for the Israelites? How can believers determine their own spiritual health? When you have been victorious in a battle with a sin-symptom, what led to your victory? What practical warnings against sin would you give others?

REFLECT: How do you distinguish between the kingdom of sin and death, and Kingdom of Life and Righteousness? What guides your decisions? What is your “owners manual?” In what sense is Yeshua Messiah your own personal physician (Isaiah 53:5)? Why is it that unless the heart is changed, there can be no solving the sin problem? What happens to the “good news” message of the Gospel when the “bad news” of sin defiling all it touches is left out?

Beginning with the previous Torah portion (**to see link click 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** (see **Bv – The Test of Tsara’at**), and **the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness** (see **Cg – The Test of M’tsora**).



Since the same signs were often present for both human **skin conditions** and for **fungal infestations** of **garments** or **homes** (see **Ck – Cleansing from Mildew in a House**), Hebrew speakers used the term **tsara’at** in both instances. Ritually defiling infestations were no doubt some form of fungus, such as mold or mildew, that was **greenish or reddish** in appearance. Since these fungi flourish in damp conditions, Canaan’s rainy winter season would have provided a perfect breeding ground. The fungi could **infect** clothing, typically made of wool from sheep or linen from flax. The fungi could also **infect leather**, whether **the skin** by **itself** or anything made of **leather**, such as **belts (Second kings 1:8)**, or skins that held liquids **(Joshua 9:4).** Items with such a **greenish or reddish stain** would be quarantined by **the priest for seven days** and then re-examined. If **the stain** had spread, it was deemed **contagious tsara‘at.** Trying to remove it was fruitless, and **the garment** had to be **burned (13:51-52).** For us today this may not strike us as

very significant, but for Israelites, who had to make their **clothes** by hand, every **garment** represented a significant amount of time and effort.

If, however, **the stain** had not spread, **the garment** was to be **washed**, **quarantined** another **seven days**, and re-examined by **the priest**. If there was no change in appearance – even though **the stain** had not spread – **the garment** was still impure and had to be **burned**. But if **the stain** had faded, the affected area was to be **torn out of the garment** and washed again (and no doubt patched). If **the stain** ever reappeared, it was considered an “outbreak” and the **garment** was to be immediately **burned**.[234]

When tsara‘at infected an article of clothing, whether it be a woolen or a linen garment, on the threads (the vertical, drawn threads of the loom) **or the woven-in parts of either linen or wool** (woven by means of the horizontal action of the shuttle)**, or on a hide or item made of leather; then if the stain on the garment, hide, threads, woven-in parts or leather item is greenish or reddish, it is an infection of tzara‘at and is to be shown to the priest. The priest was to examine the stain and quarantine the garment that had the infection for seven days. On the seventh day he** was **to re-examine the stain; if the stain had spread on the garment** (see **By – The Examination of Spreading Tsara’at**)**, threads, woven-in parts or leather, whatever its use, the infection** was considered **a contagious tsara‘at, ritually unclean, and it** needed to **be completely burned up. But if, when the priest examined it, he** saw **that the infection had not spread on the garment, then the priest** was **to order it be washed and quarantined for seven more days.** Then **the priest** was **to examine it after the stain had been washed, and if he** saw **that the stain had not changed color, then, even though the stain has not spread, it is unclean.** Then **ADONAI** declared that it was completely **burned up** because it was **rotten. If,** however, **the priest examined the garment and** saw **that the stain had faded after being washed, then he** was **to tear the stain out of it. But if the stain appeared again in the garment, it** was considered to be **contagious and completely burned up. But if the infection** was **gone from the garment** that had just been **washed, then it** was **to be washed a second time, and** then, at that point, **it** would be declared ritually **clean (13:47-58).**

The section finishes, as elsewhere, with a brief summary statement. **This is the mitzvah concerning infections of tsara‘at in a garment of wool or linen, or in the threads or the woven-in parts, or in any leather item – when to**

declare it clean and when to declare it unclean (13:59).

ADONAI was using tsara'at as an illustration of the kingdom of sin and death. There was to be no compromise when it came to tsara'at, and there was to be no compromise in the purity and holiness of the individual Israelite so that he would not die in a state of ritual uncleanness for defiling God's holy Tabernacle/Temple (Leviticus 15:31).

We, like the ancient Israelites, should not compromise our spiritual purity and holiness. We need to realize that there is a spiritual battle going on in our lives. **John** warns us: **do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world – the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and pride in our achievements and possessions – these are not from the Father, but are from this world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (First John 2:15-17).**

The kingdom of the world and **the kingdom of God** are inherently incompatible, mutually exclusive and opposed to one another **(First John 4:5-6, 5:4-5; John 15:19; Galatians 6:14).** True believers, therefore, will not be characterized by a habitual **love** for **the world**, nor will worldly people demonstrate a genuine affection for **the Gospel** and **its Lord (John 3:20; Acts 7:51, 13:8-10, 17:5** and **13; Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21,** and **First Thessalonians 2:14-16).**

Clearly, there is an unmistakable line of demarcation between the things of **God** and the things of **the world**. The ongoing moral and ethical deterioration of contemporary culture makes this obvious. Even brief consideration provides a lengthy list of cultural agendas that are aggressively hostile to biblical teachings: an attack on the traditional family by feminism; an active promotion of sexual promiscuity and homosexuality (see **Ae – The Bible and Homosexual Practice**); an emphasis on materialism and hedonism by the secular media; a steady decline in standards of personal integrity and business ethics; the confusion of right and wrong by postmodern relativism; and so on . . .

To support **his** rebuke, **John** doesn't offer a long list of specifics or detailed illustrations. Instead, **he** presents **three general reasons** believers must **not love the world: because of who they are, because of what the world does, and**

because of where the world is going.

1. Because of who believers are: If anyone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him (First John 2:15b). Because believers are forgiven **(Psalm 86:5, 130:3-4; Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 26:28; Luke 1:77; Ephesians 1:7** and **4:32; Colossians 1:14, 2:13-14, 3:13; First John 2:12)**, have a true knowledge of **God (Second Corinthians 2:14, 4:6; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:9-10)**, have **the Word of God** living in them **(Psalm 119:11; Colossians 3:16)**, have overcome Satan **(James 4:7; First John 4:4)**, and have an increasingly intimate relationship with **the Father (First John 2:12-14)**, they cannot **love the world**. **Anyone** who **loves the world** demonstrates that **the love of the Father is not in him.** Like **Demas,** such a spiritual defector reveals that any previous claim to know and **love God** was nothing but a lie **(First John 2:19)**.

Nevertheless, the basic identity of believers as the children of **ADONAI** does not make us immune to **the world's** allure. Because we are still **sinners** – saved by grace – we are tempted through our remaining flesh by **the world's** behaviors and schemes **(Matthew 26:41; First Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 6:16; James 1:12-14; First Peter 5:8-9).** Whether the temptation comes from **worldly** priorities, **worldly** amusements, **worldly** riches, or **worldly** lusts, we need to resist **the world's** efforts to seduce us. **Yeshua** warned **His** listeners: **No servant can serve two masters; for he will either hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (Luke 16:13).**

2. Because of what the world does: For all that is in the world – the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and pride in our achievements and possessions – these are not from the Father, but are from this world (First John 2:16). Although **it** manifests **itself** in external actions, the roots of **sin** go much deeper, embedded in the very fabric of the depraved human heart. **Sin** permeates the fallen mind, internally defiling **the sinner** in every aspect of **his** being **(Matthew 15:18-20)**. Thus, the TaNaKh likens **sin** to **a** deadly **plague (First Kings 8:38)**, **filthy garments (Zechariah 3:3-4),** or even **filthy menstrual rags (Isaiah 64:6). Sin** is so foul that **Ha'Shem hates it (Proverbs 15:9)** and **sinners loathe themselves** because of **their** inherent weakness **(Ezeki'el 6:9)**. **Sin** is so humanly incurable that **sinners** have no capacity in and of **themselves** to remedy **their sin (Romans 8:7-8; First Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1)**. Finally, **sin** is universal. **David** wrote: **They have all turned**

aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one (Psalm 14:3; Isaiah 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:10-12, 3:23, and **5:12).**

The three-fold attack on humanity through **the flesh**, **the eyes** and **the pride in our achievements and possessions** can be most easily seen in **Genesis 3:1-7,** one of the most foundational and pivotal passages in Scripture. There **Satan** utilized the same threefold temptation to attack his target. **Adam and Eve** succumbed in **Genesis 3:6**, plunging the human race into **sin**. **When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her; and he ate. The Adversary** appealed to **Eve's** desire for food (**the desires of the old nature**), **her** desire to have something attractive (**the desires of the eyes**), and **her** desire to have **wisdom** (**the pride of life**). **Adam** accepted the same enticements without protest and ate the fruit **his wife** gave **him**, and **the Lawless One's kingdom** gained its initial foothold on earth.

It is not surprising, then, to see that **the world**, under **the Tempter's** leadership, continues to assault sinners through those same three pathways of temptation. **The Ruler of Darkness** plays on the corruptibility of the fallen human heart to achieve the maximum impact for **evil** and chaos in **the world**. But we are not slaves to the diabolical, corrupt **world** system **(Romans 6:5-14; James 4:7; First Peter 5:8-9; First John 4:1-6)**. Like our **Lord**, who has redeemed us, we possess the ability to successfully resist the temptations of this world **(Romans 8:1-13; James 4:7)**.

3. Because of where the world is going: The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever (First John 2:15-17). The third reason we are **not** to **love the world** is because **it is passing away**. The principle of **the kingdom of sin and death** is the exact opposite of the principle of **the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness**. Therefore, the living dead in the world are destined for eternal **death** in hell, but believers are destined for eternal **life** in heaven (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**). **The one who does the will of God,** who trusts and obeys **Messiah**, has nothing to fear concerning **the world's** process of self-destruction **(First Thessalonians 1:10** and **5:9).** It is **God's** will that people believe the Gospel, repent of their **sin**, and embrace **Yeshua Messiah** as their personal **Lord** and **Savior (Mark 1:15; John 6:29; First Timothy 2:4-6).** By doing this they will demonstrate that they **love** what **ADONAI loves** and **hate** what

He hates. They will clearly no longer be devoted to the unbelieving **world** system and will shun **its** continuous appeal to **sin**, which comes through **the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and pride in achievements and possessions.**[235]

What is the future of disease or illness? In the present world . . . **death**. But in **ADONAI's** new creation, it will be done away with because of **Messiah's** victory over the grave. For the believer, this life of pollution and pain, of disease and **death**, will end with the glorification of the people of **God**. Because disease and **death** are incompatible with the glory of **YHVH**, nothing impure will enter **the heavenly City (Revelation 21:27)**. The same promise has not been given to the wicked **(Revelation 22:11)**.[236] There is no middle ground.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** great **love** and holiness! **You love** to change **unclean** hearts and make them **clean**. **"Come now, let us reason together,"** says **ADONAI**. **"Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they will become like wool (Isaiah 1:18).** Even more important than having a **clean** body, is to have a **clean** heart. No amount of good works can make **a** heart **clean**, but your gracious **love** gives to all who **love** and follow **God (Romans 10:9-10), Yeshua's righteousness**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).***

*How awesome it is that **You** place together Jews and Gentiles into one body, making them both **clean** in **You** and giving them both access to **the Father** thru you. **For He is our shalom, the One who made the two into one and broke down the middle wall of separation. Within His flesh He made powerless the hostility – the law code of mitzvot contained in regulations. He did this in order to create within Himself one new man from the two groups, making shalom, and to reconcile both to God in one body through the cross – by which He put the hostility to death. And He came and proclaimed shalom to you who were far away and shalom to those who were near – for through Him we both have access to the Father by the same Ruach (Ephesians 2:14-18)** Looking forward to loving and praising **You** and **Your** great name thru all eternity! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

Haftarah Tazria: M'lakhim Bet (Second Kings 5:19)
(see the commentary on Deuteronomy Af – Parashah)

Naaman, a ranking **Syrian general**, was infected with **tsara'at (Second Kings 5:1). Jewish tradition teaches that he was a great warrior but also arrogant and proud (Numbers R. 7:4-5), and so Ha'Shem struck him with tsara'at.** On one of **his** many raiding trips **Naaman** had captured an **Israelite girl**, who suggested that **he** go to **Isra'el** for healing **(Second Kings 5:3)**. **The king** of **Isra'el** responded by tearing **his** clothes and saying: **Am I YHVH?** For only **God** can heal **tsara'at (Second Kings 5:7).** The haftarah cuts off in mid-verse **(5:19b)**, before **Naaman** started home. Perhaps **Naaman** had a new "home," given **his** new belief that **there is no God in all the earth except in Isra'el (Second Kings 5:15b). The Syrian general** departed from **Elisha** in peace, taking with **him two mule loads** of the land of **Isra'el** so that **he** could build **an altar** and **offer sacrifices** to **the God of Isra'el** alone **(Second Kings 5:17** and **19**). **Naaman**, cleansed of **tsara'at** believed in **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**.

B'rit Hadashah reading (Luke 7:35):

Yeshua quoted a summary of **Isaiah 35:5-6, 26:19, and 61:1** to **John's disciples – the blind see, those with tsara'at are cleansed, the dead are raised, and the poor rejoice in the Good News (Luke 7:22).** If **John** couldn't see **Yeshua** as **the Messiah**, then **he** would be lacking **wisdom**! But **the proof of wisdom is in all the kinds of people it produces (Luke 7:35). The rabbis teach that four people are considered as if they are dead: a pauper, a leper, a blind man, and one who is childless (Ned. 64b). In fact, the Talmud says that curing someone of tsara'at is the equivalent of raising him from the dead (Num 12:12 in Sanh. 47a). Messiah** does this and more! **He** cleanses those who are most excluded from the activities of life and from the camp of **Isra'el**, and **He** draws them near to **ADONAI**. **Yeshua's** deeds offer hope to the social outcasts among the people **(Isaiah 35:5-6)**. The walking dead jump for life![237]