

## **#27 Tazria Leviticus 12:1-13:59**

By Moshe Schwab

### **While Praying**

- \* Stand strong together with others.
- \* Keep your life from coming apart; change and be holy
- \* Life is not for cheap thrills; being at peace with God is what's important.
- \* Be connected to God's peace; allow our God thoughts to bring us back to the truth.

Tazria means “she conceives.” The woman is to have a 7 day niddah<sup>1</sup> followed by a 33 day period of purification if it is a boy, 14 days of niddah for a girl followed by 66 days of purification. If a woman conceives a boy he is to be circumcised on the eighth day.

Titus wasn't circumcised in Galatians 2 because of the danger it presented for adult men. Adult circumcision could be a death sentence in ancient times. No one in Israel was circumcised in the desert because they were traveling. The reason there were God-fearers (Gentiles who followed God's commandments, but weren't circumcised) back in Yeshua's time is because the God-fearer could die from circumcision.

Shaul (Paul) said he taught circumcision in Galatians 5:11. He is talking about the circumcision of baby boys on the eighth day. The problem he is referring to in Galatians 5:11 is about people persecuting him concerning extra man-made laws about not associating with Gentiles at all (made from Exodus 34:15-16). New believing Gentiles weren't idolaters and therefore it should have been okay to form relationships with them.<sup>2</sup>

Also in this portion, when someone has a skin sore, boil, burn, or sore on their head or under their beard that could turn tzara'at (leprosy), they are to be examined by the Cohen (priest) and the Cohen is to determine if they are leprosy or not. If they are leprosy, they are unclean. If it is not leprosy, they will be isolated for seven day periods to determine if they are leprosy. Being bald does not make a person unclean. People with tzara'at must identify themselves by wearing torn clothes and by voice, and live outside the camp. The Cohen will also examine clothing for tzara'at and if it is infected the garment must be burned up.<sup>3</sup>

We see God's protection over women in the purification period for women following childbirth giving her time to recover. Also, there were many instructions given for watching out for leprosy. It shows us that the commandments of God are there to protect us and help us. We should always remember that God is for us and cares about His people.

In the Haftarah for this portion, it begins with the school of the prophets being miraculously fed. Then the captain of the armies of Aram, Na'aman is healed of tzara'at (leprosy). Na'aman went to king of Israel first and the king was despondent over Na'aman asking him for healing, but Elisha heard about it and told the king to send Na'aman to him. Elisha tells him to dip in the Jordan 7 times and he did so and was healed. Elisha took no reward, but his servant Gehazi inappropriately asked for the reward and he and his descendents were punished with tzara'at.

One of the signs that the ancient rabbis said would be a sign of the messiah is the healing of someone with leprosy. In Luke we see Yeshua performing many signs and fulfilling the sign of healing someone with leprosy.

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<sup>1</sup> Niddah – menstruation.

<sup>2</sup> The only place I know of where they will circumcise an adult male is in Israel because it is dangerous.

<sup>3</sup> In our time, we go to the dermatologist and get meds for sores or skin infections.

Luke 7:20-23 CJB:

When the men came to him, they said, "Yochanan the Immerser has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come? Or should we keep looking — for someone else?'" Right then he was healing many people of diseases, pains and evil spirits, and giving sight to many who were blind. So he answered them by saying, "Go, tell Yochanan what you have been seeing and hearing: the blind are seeing again, the lame are walking, people with tzara'at are being cleansed, the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised, the Good News is being told to the poor — and how blessed is anyone not offended by me!"

Israel was given God's commandments and as a body of people they learned and grew up spiritually together. As believers in the Messiah, we are to do the same. Shaul said, "And let us keep paying attention to one another, in order to spur each other on to love and good deeds, not neglecting our own congregational meetings, as some have made a practice of doing, but, rather, encouraging each other. Hebrew 10 24-25 CJB.

Whether that is at home or with others we need encouragement. Stress and worldly values can bring us down. Sometimes people's words can bring us down. The Bible says we need to be able to listen to each other and be gentle towards each other. Ephesians 5:2-3 says, "Always be humble, gentle and patient, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort to preserve the unity the Spirit gives through the binding power of shalom."

### **Name some ways or examples of how to be humble, gentle, and patient.**

Someone I knew embarrassed me in front of a group because they didn't like me wearing t-shirts. They could have talked to me personally about it.

Don't correct people in public.

Don't defend yourself in a group of people; just let it go. The Bible says we're not to get into arguments. If it's an issue to be addressed, do it privately and be humble and gentle when addressing the issue.

Instead of being impatient with someone who is taking their time; be patient and be kind to them.

Listen to what someone has to say even if you don't agree with them. What they have to say could be helpful. Successful people are good listeners and learn from others.

### **Lashon harah – the "evil tongue"**

Aharon and Miriam (the sister of Moshe) had said things against Moshe and God temporarily put leprosy on Miriam as a result until she repented. Leprosy is discussed in this portion. The ancient rabbis then associated leprosy with sin or saying something bad against someone. We call gossip or saying something against someone lashon harah.

Ya'akov (James) talked about the "evil tongue" (lashon harah) in James 3:6, 10, "Yes, the tongue is a fire, a world of wickedness... Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing! Brothers, it isn't right for things to be this way.

Yeshua (Jesus) also talked about lashon harah. It first says the Pharisees were thinking about how they might kill Yeshua. "The P'rushim went out and began plotting how they might do away with Yeshua." Matthew 12:14 CJB. Then Yeshua talks about those who do what is right and those who don't (good and bad fruit. "If you make a tree good, its fruit will be good; and if you make a tree bad, its fruit will be bad; for a tree is known by its fruit; Matthew 12:33 CJB.

Then beginning in next verse, Yeshua starts talking about lashon harah. "You snakes! How can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what overflows from the heart. The good person brings forth good things from his store of good, and the evil person brings forth evil things from his store of evil. Moreover, I tell you this: on the Day of Judgment people will have to give account for every careless word they have spoken; for by your own words you will be acquitted, and by your own words you will be condemned;" Matthew 12:34-37 CJB.

The leaders of Israel back then were picked by Rome, so they probably didn't have the proper upbringing to lead as they should – they should have known better. When Yeshua was crucified, it was by these same Roman leaders. It wasn't the Jews who killed Yeshua it was Rome. They should have known they were committing lashon harah. Yeshua said our every words will be judged and He called these people poisonous snakes.<sup>4</sup> Can you imagine walking in a room with these unruly people; it would be like walking into a room of poisonous snakes.

Yeshua says that what is in their heart (our heart is what makes us who we are) overflows into what they speak. A person with good thoughts in their heart does good; a person with bad thoughts in their heart does evil. Yeshua takes lashon harah very seriously just as God did with Aharon and Miriam. Yeshua said even our thoughts will be judged. From our thoughts comes our actions. The ancient rabbis say Lashon harah is said to even apply to our thoughts. It says in Jeremiah 17:9-10 CJB, "The heart is more deceitful than anything else and mortally sick. Who can fathom it? I, ADONAI, search the heart; I test inner motivations; in order to give to everyone what his actions and conduct deserve."

Lashon harah begins in our thoughts

It is thinking bad thoughts towards someone.

It is gossiping.

It is saying bad things about someone.

It is a critical spirit.

It will affect how we treat someone.

The first one in the Bible to commit lashon harah was the serpent in the garden.

We are not Pollyannas.<sup>5</sup> We can honestly appraise how people act and think and how to treat them well. Then we can help them if appropriate and in an appropriate way.

Some people misinterpret the Bible harshly. I have heard Christians leaders saying they will shame or shun people. Isn't that supposed to be used for those who are sinning badly (1 Corinthians 5)?<sup>6</sup> They even use this to shun anyone who doesn't believe like they do. They are filled with hate at times towards others because of what they think. The Bible said in Jeremiah, God will judge what we think, so don't be so quick to have a critical spirit. Yeshua called these people snakes – He must have also been referring to the serpent in the garden when he called them snakes. It doesn't seem they got the message.

**Back to talking about encouragement.** We need people who we can trust to talk to about the issues of life. When we have peace in life it brings us together, it is binding the Bible says. We need teachings that set us in the right direction against all the pressures and influences of a cynical and materialistic culture.

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<sup>4</sup> Strong's Enhanced Dictionary defines the snakes as vipers or poisonous snakes.

<sup>5</sup> A person who never sees anything wrong.

<sup>6</sup> When someone is sinning we don't try to drive them away, but with humility help them to change their thinking. "Brothers, suppose someone is caught doing something wrong. You who have the Spirit should set him right, but in a spirit of humility, keeping an eye on yourselves so that you won't be tempted too.. Galatians 6:1 CJB

The Bible says we don't necessarily need a lot to be happy. "For we have brought nothing into the world; and we can take nothing out of it; so if we have food and clothing, we will be satisfied with these. Furthermore, those whose goal is to be rich fall into temptation;" Timothy 6:7-9 CJB. Don't let the drive for material things tear your relationships apart. Don't let the critical behavior of others get under your skin. 1 Corinthians 1:10 says, "Be restored to having a common mind and a common purpose."

Our purpose most of all is to love God. "And you are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart, all your being and all your resources. "These words, which I am ordering you today, are to be on your heart; and you are to teach them carefully to your children. You are to talk about them when you sit at home, when you are traveling on the road, when you lie down and when you get up;" Deuteronomy 6:5-7 CJB. We should put effort into it. We are to teach our children and we also can encourage and teach each other, and also be good examples. Every part of life is sacred and an is opportunity to encourage and help each other spiritually.

We are to help each other, but we also need to take personal responsibility. We need to keep our life in good order and from coming apart. We need to make that possible. We are to take care of the physical and spiritual aspects of life. God wants us to change (and grow) and be holy. Our spiritual life is of value. "So, my dear brothers, stand firm and immovable, always doing the Lord's work as vigorously as you can, knowing that united with the Lord your efforts are not in vain;" 1 Cor. 15:58 CJB.

We want our lives to matter. One fellow once told me he wanted to make enough money to have a huge headstone at the cemetery. The reality is, no one will ever get to enjoy their headstone. We just read we can take nothing out of life with us in 1 Timothy 6:7. When we look back on our lives, will we have been a kind gentle person who encourages others and has brought peace and blessing into this world? Will we have shown others how to be good and love each other? Some of the most impactful times in my life have been the kindness of others. I've learned a lot of that from my wife. She points out ways that I can do things better. It sometimes hurts, but I am willing to listen and I have become a better person for it.

"Stay alert, stand firm in the faith, behave like a mentsh, grow strong." 1 Cor. 16:13 CJB. It says to be alert. Don't just let life push you around, but be a mentsh, a good person.<sup>7</sup> Learn and grow strong. We have reason to be on the alert. We are in a spiritual battle Shaul says, "Finally, grow powerful in union with the Lord, in union with his mighty strength! Use all the armor and weaponry that God provides, so that you will be able to stand against the deceptive tactics of the Adversary. Eph. 6:10-11 CJB. The Bible here calls the devil our adversary. If we don't take a stand for ourselves spiritually, who is going to do it? Shaul said stand.

Life is not for cheap thrills; being at peace with God is what's important. It says in Proverbs 5:21-23, "For ADONAI is watching a man's ways; he surveys all his paths. A wicked person's own crimes will trap him, he will be held fast by the ropes of his sin. He will die from lack of discipline; the magnitude of his folly will make him totter and fall. Prov. 5:21-23 CJB. Our errors in life will bring us down. We don't want that. James 3:17-18 says, "But the wisdom from above is, first of all, pure, then peaceful, kind, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And peacemakers who sow seed in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

We should want to be pure spiritually. It brings peace, kindness, good reason, mercy, and good virtues. Righteousness means to live right. Living right brings a harvest of peace wherever we go. We can be

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<sup>7</sup> When the Bible tells us to be good it is talking about keeping God's commandments. God's commandments teach us to do what is right and good.

connected to God's peace; allow our God thoughts to bring us back to the truth. Isaiah 26:3-4 says, "A person whose desire rests on you, you preserve in perfect peace, because he trusts in you. Trust in ADONAI forever, because in Yah ADONAI is a Rock of Ages." Isa. 26:3-4 CJB. There was a rock in the desert near Mt. Sinai where water flowed out of it and gave Israel life. Trust and God and bring good into your life.

Shaul says we should bring focus into our lives in whatever we do. Philippians 4:8-9 CJB says, "Brothers, focus your thoughts on what is true, noble, righteous, pure, lovable or admirable, on some virtue or on something praiseworthy. Keep doing what you have learned." I once was listening to a talk show host interview someone about how to live a good life. He had written a book several hundred pages long. I'm sure it was a good book, but I just happened to think about how this verse alone could do the job. Focus our thoughts on doing what is right and those things which are worthy of praise.

There is so much of life that kind of comes at us. We need each others encouragement. Just like Israel needed to grow up spiritually, we need to grow up and learn to be humble, kind, and loving. Life in our country can drive us toward materialism. It's not a sin to be prosperous, but don't lose track of our spirituality. We are to love God and do what is right. It should be part of our daily lives. No one can do it for us. We need to take on that responsibility.

What will we see when we look back on our lives? Will we have something spiritual to look back on and appreciate or will we just have a big headstone? Be strong, stay alert to fight against the devil and don't do what is wrong. Kefa said in 1 Peter 5:8-9 CJB, "Stay sober, stay alert! Your enemy, the Adversary, stalks about like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Stand against him, firm in your trust." Be pure, peaceful, and kind. Trust in God and His ways and bring good into your life through God. Focus on doing what is right. Proverbs 4:23 CJB says, "Above everything else, guard your heart; for it is the source of life's consequences. Guard your heart, focus your thoughts on doing what is right and good.