

METZORA (*one being diseased*)



The unique laws of the metzora have established that, despite the fact that his contamination is manifested in a change on his body, it was caused by his degraded spiritual condition. Being alone outside the camp gives him the opportunity to reflect on his deficiencies and to repent so that he can once more become worthy of becoming part of his nation. As soon as that change takes place within his mind and heart, the same יהוה who afflicted him will remove the mark of his degradation and he can begin the process of return.

Leviticus 14:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, **2 זאת** *This will be the Torah of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He will be brought to the priest: 3 And the priest will go outside of the camp; and the priest examines to see if the sores have healed in the afflicted person. C-MATS*

Question: What are seven things that bring on tzara'at?

1. slander
2. bloodshed
3. false oath
4. incest
5. pride
6. robbery
7. envy

Question: Why is the metzora brought to the Priest? The Priest's function as a condemner and ostracizer runs contrary to his most basic nature and role. The Priest is commanded by יהוה to "bless His people Israel with love." A "disciple of Aaron" is one who "loves peace, pursues peace, loves יהוה's creatures and brings them close to Torah." But this is precisely the reason that the Torah entrusts to the Priest the task of condemning the metzora. There is nothing more hateful to יהוה than division between His children. The metzora must be ostracized because, through his slander and tale bearing, he is himself a source of discord; nevertheless, the Torah is reluctant to separate him from the community. So it is not enough that the technical experts say that he marked by tzara'at. It is only when the Priest--whose very being shudders at the thought of banishing a member of the community--is convinced that there is no escaping a verdict of tzara'at, that the metzora is separated from his people. And it is only when the one doing the banishing is covered with loving concern for the banished person, that the penalty will yield a positive result--the repentance and rehabilitation of the metzora. There is another lesson here as well: it is not the fact of the tzara'at that renders the metzora impure, but the Priest's declaration of his impurity. In other words, no matter how terrible a person's state may be, to speak ill of him is more terrible still. The Priest's saying that he is impure affects his spiritual state far more profoundly than the actual fact of his tzara'at! *Chumash*

Leviticus 14:4 Then the priest will command for him who is to be cleansed to take two living clean birds and cedar wood and scarlet *yarn* and hyssop *branch*. C-MATS

Question: How does the metzora receive atonement for his sins? Atonement for sin requires that the former sinner purge himself of the moral flaw that caused his misdeeds. The underlying cause of slander and gossip -- the sins that are punished by tzara'at -- is haughtiness, because it breeds the contempt for others that lets one talk about them callously. The metzora's repentance entails a resolve to change himself, a change that is graphically symbolized by the Cedarwood, Crimson thread, and Hyssop. *Chumash*



Hossop

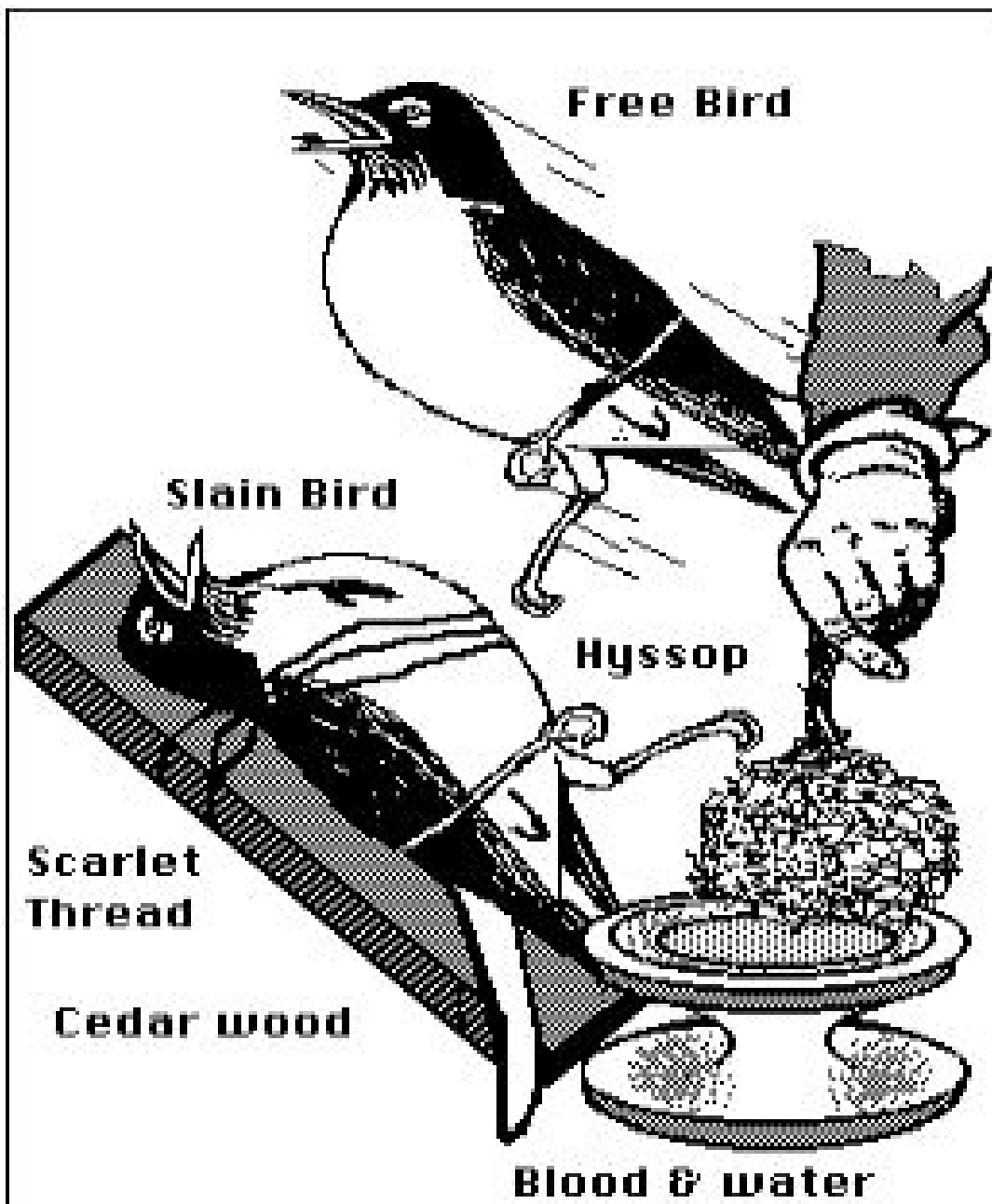


Oldest cedarwood tree



Scarlet thread

Question: What is the purpose of bringing the cedar, scarlet thread, and hyssop? He should bring cedar wood, because he has exalted himself like a tall cedar, but he should humble himself like a grass (hyssop). He should bring a tongue-like strip of wool dyed crimson. But the true meaning of humility is not to be broken and bowed, but to be humble even as one stands straight and tall. *Chumash*



The bird was strapped to the cedar wood, cut open, water was run over it and mingled with the blood. The hyssop was dipped in it and sprinkled 7 times on the leper. The other bird was set free

Leviticus 14:5 Then shall command the priest to kill one of **את** the birds **האחת** the one in an earthen vessel over running water: 6 As for **את** the living bird, he will take **אתה** it (him) **ואת** and the cedar wood **את** and the scarlet yarn **את** and the hyssop leaves and will dip **אתם** them **ואת** and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: 7 And the priest will sprinkle upon him who is to be cleansed from the sickness seven times and will pronounce him clean and the living will be set free **את** bird into an open field. C-MATS

Question: How does this ceremony symbolize what the Messiah did for us? The bird that lives is a picture of the metzora. The bird that dies is YAHSHUA. For the metzora to live and be free from his sentence of death, another must die in His place. He does not die on the temple altar but outside the walls (bearing the sin and reproach of the disease). The bird to die was tied by a scarlet cord (our sins) to the piece of cedar wood (the altar = the stake). Yahshua like this bird was killed in an earthen vessel (his human body) and his blood was mixed with the fresh (living) water that indwelt the bowl (The Divine Spirit). The hyssop is used to sprinkle the blood on the metzora (v6, 7) signifying his cleansing is by the blood of Yahshua. (Psalm 51:7 Purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Exodus 12:22 And you take a **אחת** bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and smear the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; **ואתם** and you will not go out of the door of your house until the morning.) The living bird was dipped (baptized) into the bowl (Yahshua) into the Blood and into the Water (the Spirit) (v. 6, 7). Then it was set free in an open field. When we accepted the Messiah we are put into Yahshua; plunged into the Blood and Spirit. The Living Water communicates the work of the Blood to us. He applies the Blood to us and we fly free because of Yahshua's death!



Set the bird free

Leviticus 14:8 And he will wash who is to be cleansed **את** his clothes and shave off **את** all his hair and wash himself in water, so that he may be clean: and after that he can come into the camp, but he must live outside of his tent seven days. 9 But on the seventh day he must shave off **את** all his hair **את** on his head, **את** and his beard **את** and eyebrows, **את** and all his hair he must shave off: and he must wash **את** his clothes and wash **את** his body in water and then he will be clean. C-MATS

Question: Who shaves the metzora? The shaving must be done by the Kohen. He shaves all the hair anywhere on the outside of the metzora's body. *Chumash*

Question: Why are the head, beard, and eyebrows shaved? The head represents haughtiness, since he considered himself better and more worthy of respect than those he insulted. The beard frames the mouth, which spoke the gossip and slander. The eyebrows represent the base trait of jealousy [narrowness of the eye], which motivated him to destroy the reputation of others. *Chumash*

Leviticus 14:10 And on the eighth day he will take two male lambs without defect and **אֶתְּ** one female lamb in its first year without defect and 3/10 deals (6 ½ quarts) of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil and one log (2/3 pint) of oil. 11 And the priest will present those things that make him clean and **אֵת** the man that is to be made clean before יהוה at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation: *Prophecy Fulfilled-Lev.14:11 The leper cleansed-Sign to priesthood-Luke 5:12-14; Acts 6:7.* 12 And will take the priest **אֶתְּ** male lamb, one and offer **אֹתוֹ** him for a trespass (guilt) offering **וְאֵתְּ** and the log (2/3 pint) of oil and wave **אֹתָם** them as a wave offering before יהוה. C-MATS

Question: How is the offering waved? The Kohen lifts the living lamb and the oil and waves them toward the four directions to the One who is Master of all directions. He raises them upward and then lowers them to the Master of heaven and earth. *Chumash*

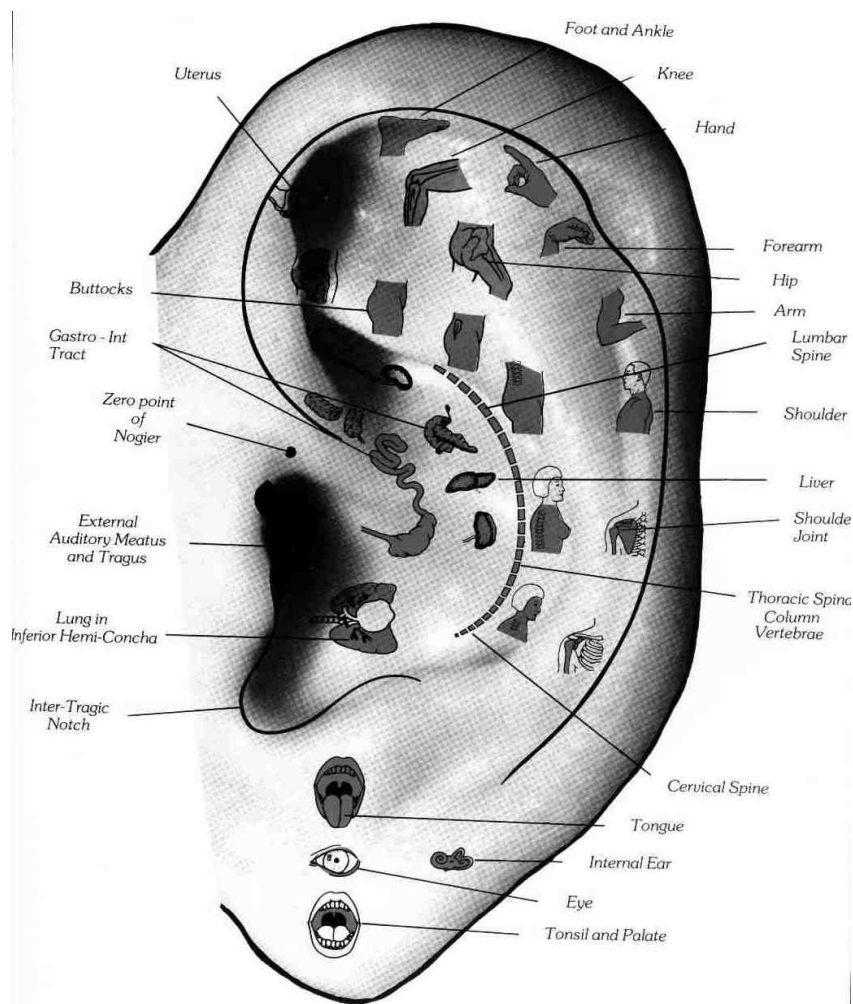


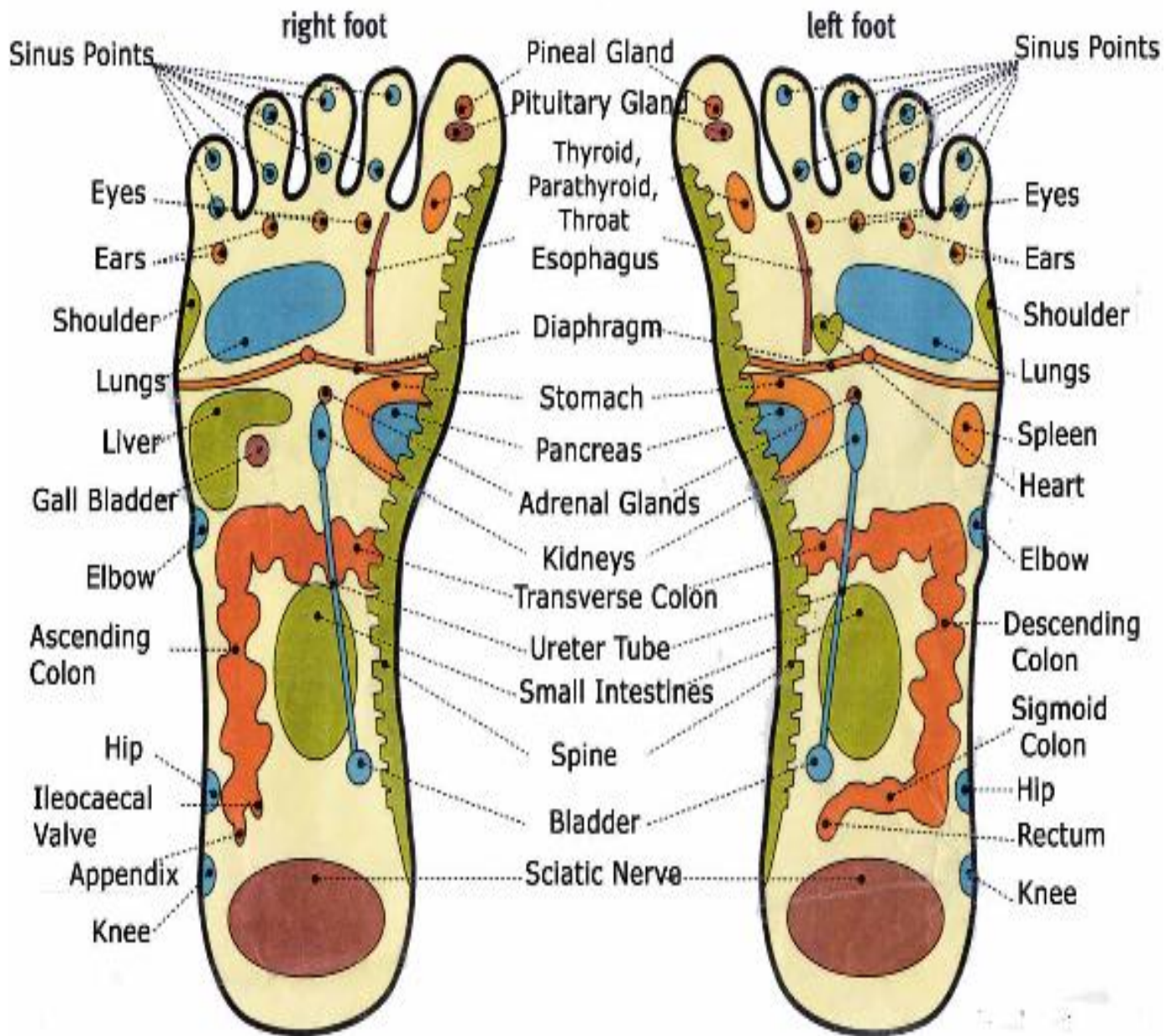
Lamb bound and ready to wave before יהוה

Leviticus 14:13 And he will kill **את** the lamb in the consecrated place where he kills **ההטאת את** the sin [offering] **את** and the burnt offering. The sin offering and trespass offering is the priests portion, it is most sacred: 14 And the priest will take some of the blood of the trespass offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot. C-MATS

Question: Why the right ear, thumb, and toe? Blood is placed on these three body parts to symbolize that henceforth the metzora must improve himself in mind (ear), deed (thumb, representing action), and effort (big toe, representing forward movement). Chumash

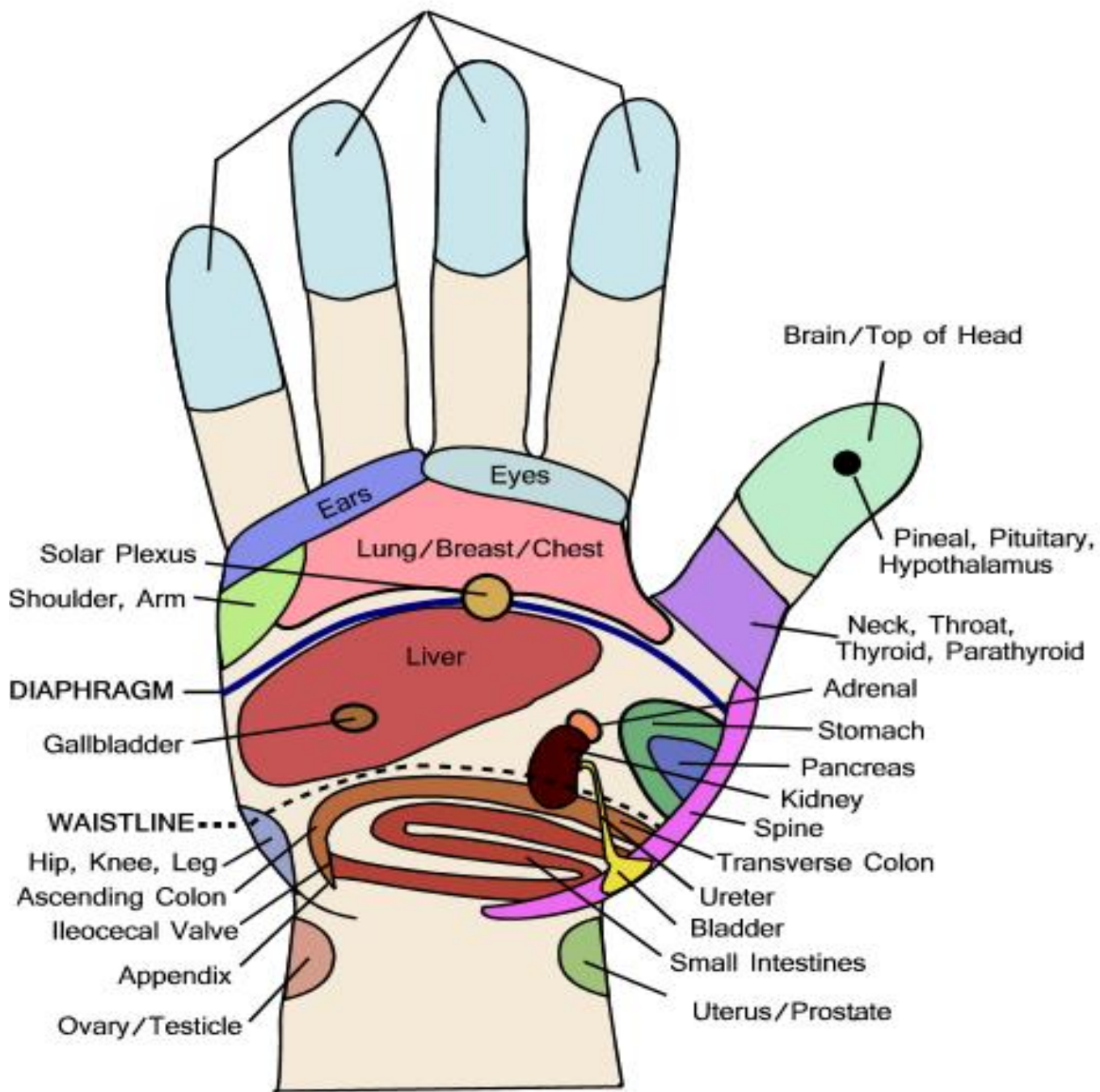
Question: What is reflexology? Reflexology is the practice of applying pressure to the feet and hands utilizing specific thumb, finger, and hand techniques without the use of oil, cream or lotion based on a system of zones and reflex areas that reflect an image of the body on the feet and hands with a premise that such work effects a physical change in the body. The benefits of reflexology have to do with the reduction of stress. Because the feet and hands help set the tension level for the rest of the body, they are an easy way to interrupt the stress signal and reset homeostasis, the body's equilibrium.





RIGHT PALM

Eyes, Sinuses, Brain



Leviticus 14:15 And the priest will take *some* of the log of oil and pour *it* into the palm of *his* own left *hand*: 16 And will dip the priest **את** his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand and will sprinkle *some* of the oil with his finger seven times before יהוה: 17 And the rest of the oil that *is* in his hand, the priest will put on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass *offering*: 18 And the remnant of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand, he will pour upon the head of him who is to be cleansed: and the priest will make atonement for him before יהוה. 19 And will offer the priest **את** **ההטאת** *the sin [offering]* and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and then he will kill **את** the burnt *offering*: 20 And will offer the priest **את** the burnt *offering* **ואת** and the grain *offering upon* the altar: and the priest will make atonement for him and he will be clean. C-MATS



The poor man

Leviticus 14:21 And if he *is* poor and cannot afford *much*; then he can take one lamb *for* a trespass *offering* to be waved to make an atonement for himself and 1/10 deal (2 quarts) of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain *offering* and a log (2/3 pint) of oil; 22 And two turtledoves or young pigeons, as he is able to afford; and one *bird* will be a **את** **הטאת** *sin [offering]* and the other a burnt *offering*. 23 And he will bring **אתם** *them* on the eighth day for his cleansing to the priest to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation before יהוה. 24 And will take the priest **את** the lamb for the trespass *offering* **ואת** and the log (2/3 pint) of oil and the priest will wave **אתם** *them as a wave offering* before יהוה. C-MATS



Wave Offering

Leviticus 14:25 And he will kill **אֶת** the lamb for the trespass (*guilt*) offering and the priest will take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot: 26 And the priest will pour *some* of the oil into the palm of his own left hand: 27 And the priest will sprinkle with his right finger *some* of the oil that *is* in his left hand seven times before יהוה: 28 And the priest will put the oil that is in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him who *is* to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot on the *same* place as the blood of the trespass offering. C-MATS



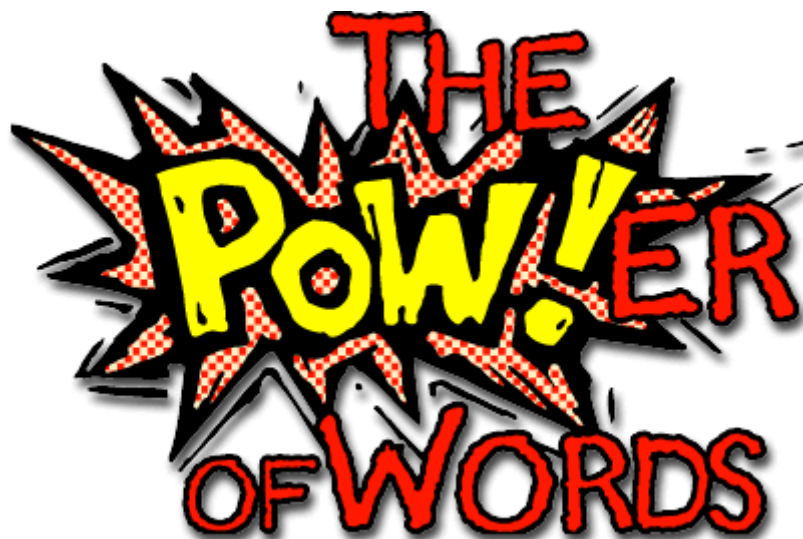
Priest poured the oil in his hand

Leviticus 14:29 And the rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand, he will put on the head of him who is to be cleansed to make atonement for him before יהוה. 30 And he will offer **את** one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, as he can afford; 31 *whatever את* such as he is able to afford, **את** one for a **את** *sin [offering]* **את** and the other for a burnt (ascent) [offering] along with the grain offering: and the priest will make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before יהוה. C-MATS

Question: How does a person know what animal to bring for an offering? The verse stresses for whichever his means are sufficient, to teach that even though turtledoves are always mentioned first, they are not preferable to young doves. A person may bring whatever he can afford. יהוה looks at the heart of the person bringing the sacrifice-not the quantity of the offering. *Chumash*

Leviticus 14:32 **זאת** *This is the Torah* for him who *has* sickness and is not able to afford *the usual elements used* for his cleansing. 33 And יהוה spoke to Moses and to Aaron saying, 34 When you enter the land of Canaan, which I *will* give to you for a possession and I put a plague on a house in the land of **אֶחָזְקֶם** *your possession*; 35 and he that owns the house will come and tell the priest saying, It seems to me a plague is in the house. C-MATS

Question: Why was the plague placed on a person's house? Tzara'at-type afflictions on houses are clearly supernatural occurrences. Obviously, their appearance is for a purpose. These tzara'at afflictions are Divine punishments for selfish behavior and gossip. יהוה mercifully begins by afflicting property -- first houses and then garments -- then, if the victim does not draw the proper lesson and repent, he will be stricken by an affliction on his body. His sin was the selfish feeling that the house is his and that there is no obligation on him to share his blessings with anyone else. He thinks that his property is his alone, acquired solely through his own efforts, and that no one else is entitled to enjoy the benefits of his personal success. But the house and the money and the success are יהוה given! The same יהוה who gave him what he has, wants him to share with others, and יהוה can easily give him more or take away what he is misusing. *Chumash*



Question: We all walk around carrying a powerful secret weapon - our power of speech. In fact, ancient Hebrew sources teach that speaking properly - by not gossiping, slandering, or speaking badly of others (even if it's true) - besides being the right thing to do, is a powerful way to spiritually protect ourselves and others from all sorts of problems and dangers. Gossip harms not only the one spoken about, but also the speaker and listeners. How do you think that could be? Whether we're aware of it or not, gossip is a form of cruelty and conditions those who say it - and those who listen without objection - to become crueler people, and there's no greater spiritual harm than that.

Question: The tongue holds the power of life and death. What do you think this means? Even though it may seem harmless - our tongue - that is the way we use it by speaking - can, if used in a positive way, make down-and-out people feel alive again, or if used cruelly can hurt people so much it's almost like killing them!

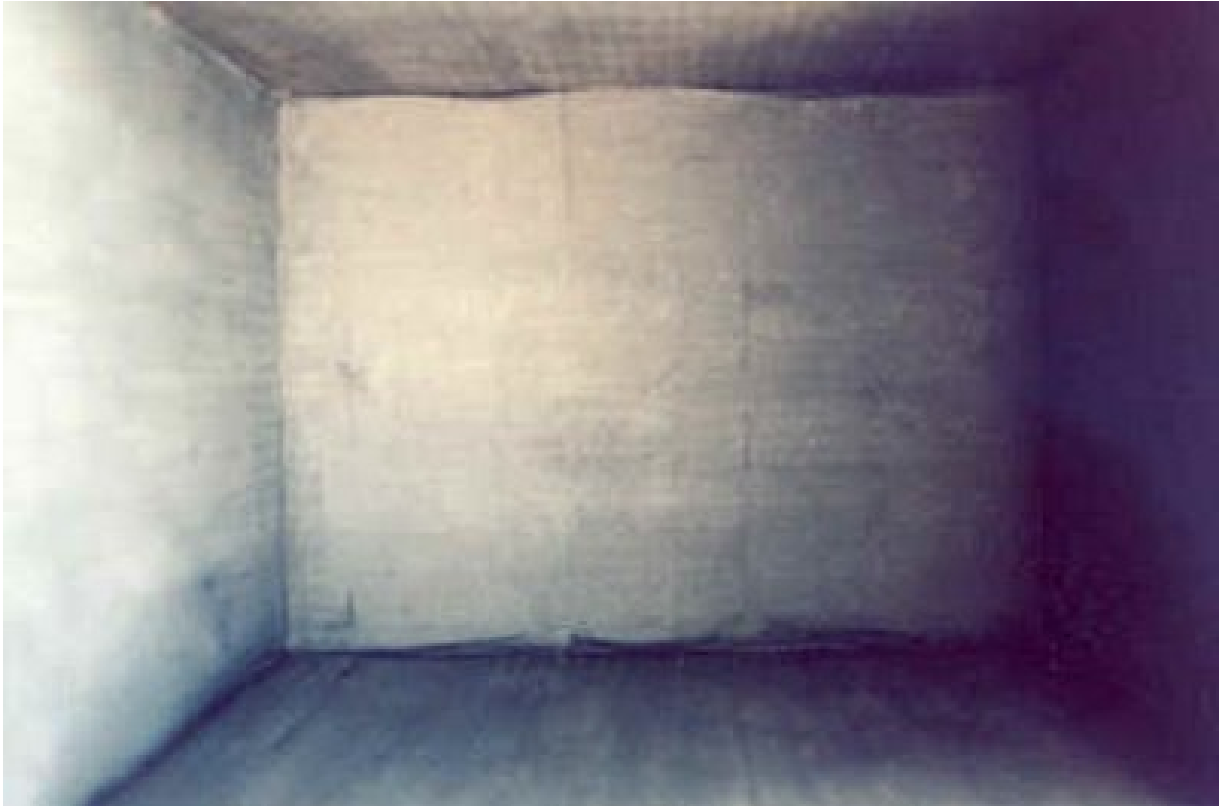
Question: יהוה judges us the way we judge others. What do you think this means? יהוה treats us measure for measure, (such as how we behave down here is how we are treated above), it follows that if we don't speak badly of others, then this damaging spiritual gossip can't happen above. It's a deep concept, but the main thing to know is that one of the best and most practical things we can do for ourselves and for others is to avoid gossip and negative speech. **Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again.** C-MATS

Question: Is there ever a point that we should stop giving someone 'another chance'? While it's right to be patient and forgiving with people, when we see that continually giving them another chance becomes seriously destructive for us, them or others, the ethical thing to do is to say (and mean) 'no more chances'.

Discuss: What are you misusing that יהוה may take away from you? How are you being selfish with what יהוה has given you?

Question: What is the order of affliction of tzara'at to produce repentance? First the plague comes upon his house. If he repents, it requires only the removal of affected stones; if not, it requires tearing down the entire house. Then the plagues come upon one's clothes. If he repents, they require washing; if not, they require burning. Then the plagues come upon his body. If he repents, he undergoes cleansing; if not, "He shall dwell alone" and be removed from his people.

Leviticus 14:36 Then the priest will command that they empty את the house before the priest goes into it to see את the plague, so that all that is in the house is not made unclean: and then the priest will go to see את the house. C-MATS



Empty the house

Question: Why does the law say to empty the house? This is why the Torah commands to remove everything from the afflicted house before the Priest arrives. Otherwise, if the house requires shutting up, all that is inside immediately becomes impure.

A man says to his friend, "Lend me a cup of wheat," and the other says, "I have none"; or one asks for the loan of a cup of barley... or a cup of dates, and the other says, "I have none." Or a woman says to her friend, "Lend me a coat," and the other says, "I have none" ... What does יהוה do? He causes tzara'at to light on his house, and as he takes out his household effects, people see, and say: "Did he not say, 'I have none'? See how much wheat is here, how much barley, how many dates! Cursed be the house with such cursed inhabitants because they would not give to others!

Leviticus 14:37 And he will examine **את** the plague and *if the plague is on the walls of the house and greenish or reddish depressions appear to be lower than the wall;* **38** Then the priest will go out of the house to its door and shut up **את** the house seven days. C-MATS



Shut up the House

Leviticus 14:39 And the priest will come again *on* the seventh day and will examine the plague *to see if it has spread in the walls of the house*; **40** Then the priest will command that they take away אֶת־ the stones where the plague *is* and they will take them to an unclean place outside the city. C-MATS

Question: What may happen if you have a wicked neighbor? Woe to the wicked and woe to his neighbor! If the afflicted wall is shared between two homes, both must take out the stones, both must scrape the walls, and both must bring the new stones.

Discuss: How does associating with unbelievers bring discomfort and pain to our life?

Leviticus 14:41 אֶת־ And the house he will cause to be *thoroughly* scraped within the inside of and they will pour out אֶת־ the dust that they scrape off *the house* outside the city to an unclean place: **42** Finally they will take other stones and put *them* in the place of those *infected* stones; and he will take other mortar and will plaster אֶת־ the house. C-MATS



Mold and Mildew on the walls of a home

Leviticus 14:43 And if the plague comes again and breaks out in the house after he has taken away **את** the *infected* stones and after he has scraped **את** the house and after it is plastered; 44 Then the priest will examine to see *if* the plague has spread in the house, *it is* a contagious plague in the house: *it is* unclean. 45 And he will break down **את** the house **את** the stones of it **ואת** and the timber thereof **ואת** and all the mortar of the house; and he will carry them outside the city to an unclean place. C-MATS



Leviticus 14:46 Also he that goes into the house while it is shut up **אתו** *he (him)* will be unclean until the evening. 47 And he who lies in the house will wash **את** his clothes; and he that eats in the house will wash **את** his clothes. 48 And if the priest shall come in and look *upon it* and, behold, the plague has not spread in the house, after *it* was plastered **את** the house: then shall declare clean the priest **את** the house, because the plague is healed. C-MATS



Leviticus 14:49 And he will take two birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop leaves to cleanse **את** the house: 50 And he will kill **את** the bird, **קִאֶתָהּ** the one in an earthen vessel over running water: 51 And he will take **את** wood, the cedar **וְאֶת־** and the hyssop leaves, **וְאֶת־** and the scarlet yarn **וְאֶת־** and the living bird and dip **אֹתָם** them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water and sprinkle the house seven times: 52 And he will cleanse **את** the house with the blood of the bird, the running water, the living bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop leaves and the scarlet yarn: 53 But he will set free **את** bird, the living *one* out of the city into the open fields and make atonement for the house: and it will be clean. C-MATS



Leviticus 14:54 **זאת** *This is* the Torah for all manner of plagues and sores, 55 And for the plague of a garment and of a house, 56 And for a swelling and for a scab and for a bright spot: 57 To determine when *it is* unclean and when *it is* clean: **זאת** *this is* the Torah for the plague. C-MATS



Leviticus 15:1 And **יהוה** spoke to Moses and to Aaron saying, 2 Speak to *the* Children of Israel and say to them, When any man has a discharge from his body, or his discharge *is* unclean. 3 **זאת** *And this* shall be his discharge is unclean *whether* it keeps running from his body *with* **זאת** his discharge or has stopped, he is unclean. 4 Every bed on which he lies that has the discharge is unclean: and everything on which he sits will be unclean. 5 And whoever touches his bed must wash his clothes and wash *himself* in water and be unclean until the evening. 6 And he who sits on *anything* on which he sat that has the discharge must wash his clothes and wash *himself* in water and be unclean until the evening. 7 And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge must wash his clothes and wash *himself* in water and be unclean until the evening. 8 And if he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean; then *the clean man* must wash his clothes and wash *himself* in water and be unclean until the evening. 9 And a saddle on which he rides that has the discharge will be unclean. 10 And whoever touches anything that was under him will be unclean until the evening; and *the person* who carries **אותם** *them* must wash his clothes and wash *himself* in water and be unclean until the evening. 11 And whoever has the discharge and has not washed his hands in water, whoever he touches must wash his clothes and bath *himself* in water and be unclean until the evening. 12 And the clay pot *that is* touched by the one who has the discharge will be broken: and every pot of wood will be washed in water. 13 And when he who has a discharge is cleansed; then he will count seven days for his cleansing and wash his clothes and bath his body in running water and *he* will be clean. 14 And on the eighth day he will take two turtledoves or young pigeons and come before **יהוה** to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation and give them to the priest: 15 And the priest will offer **אתם** *them*, one for a **חטאת** *sin* [offering] and the other for a burnt offering; and the priest will make atonement for him before **יהוה** for his discharge. 16 And if a man has a seminal emission, then he must wash in water **את** all his body and be unclean until the evening. 17 And every garment and leather which has the seminal emission will be washed with water and be unclean until the evening. C-MATS



Husband and wife

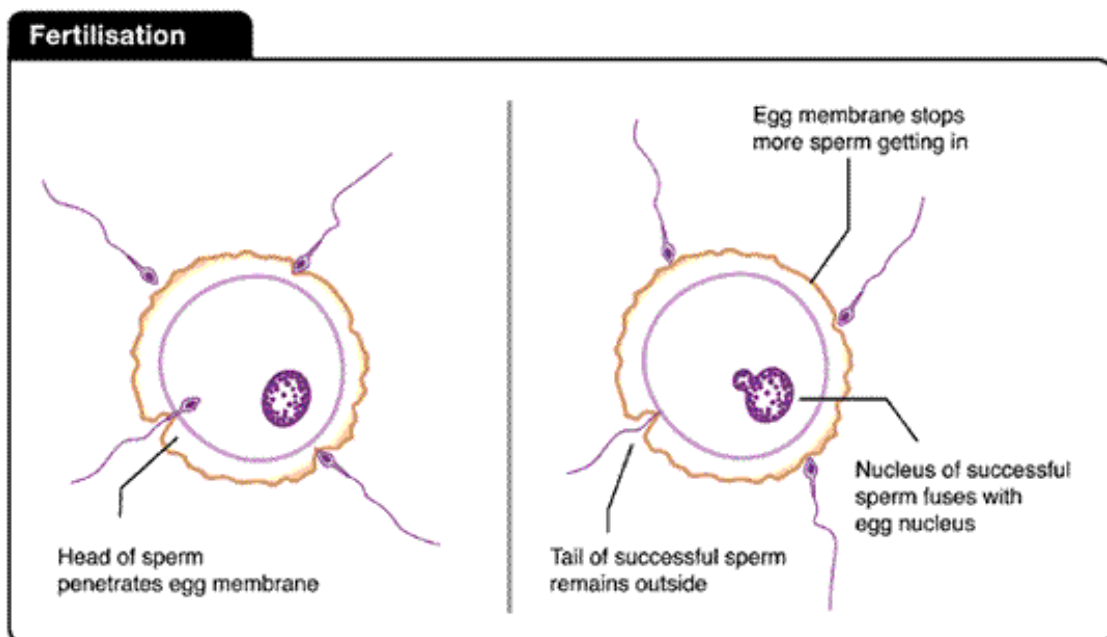
Leviticus 15:18 The woman *also* whom shall lie *with the* אִתּוֹ *man (him)* has sexual relations, they will both wash *themselves* in water and be unclean until the evening. **19** And if a woman has a discharge and the discharge from her body is blood, she will be set apart seven days: and whoever touches her will be unclean until the evening. **20** And everything that she lies on in her separation will be unclean: everything that she sits on will be unclean. **21** And whoever touches her bed must wash his clothes and wash in water and be unclean until the evening. **22** And whoever touches anything that she sat on must wash his clothes and wash in water and be unclean until the evening. **23** And if it is on *her* bed or on anything on which she sits, when a person touches it he will be unclean until the evening. **24** And if any man lies אִתָּהּ *with her* and her menstrual flow touches him, he will be unclean seven days; and the bed on which he lies will be unclean. **25** And if a woman has an discharge of blood many days not during her period or if it lasts beyond the *normal* time of her period; all the days she is having an unclean discharge, she will be just as in her *normal* period: she *will be* unclean.
C-MATS

Question: Why does the Torah ask a man to wait seven days after a woman has ended her period? Because being in constant contact with his wife, a man might develop lack of concern towards her. The Torah, therefore, ordained: Let her be unclean for seven days, in order that she shall be beloved by her husband as at the time that she first entered into the bridal chamber.
Chumash

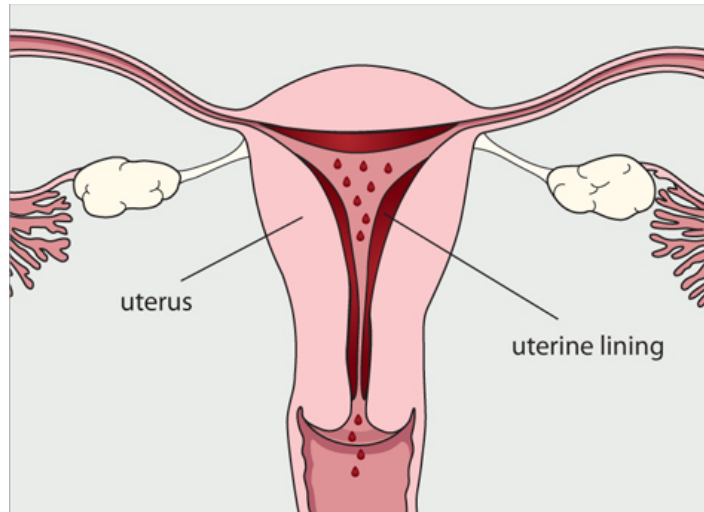
יהוה's plan is perfect



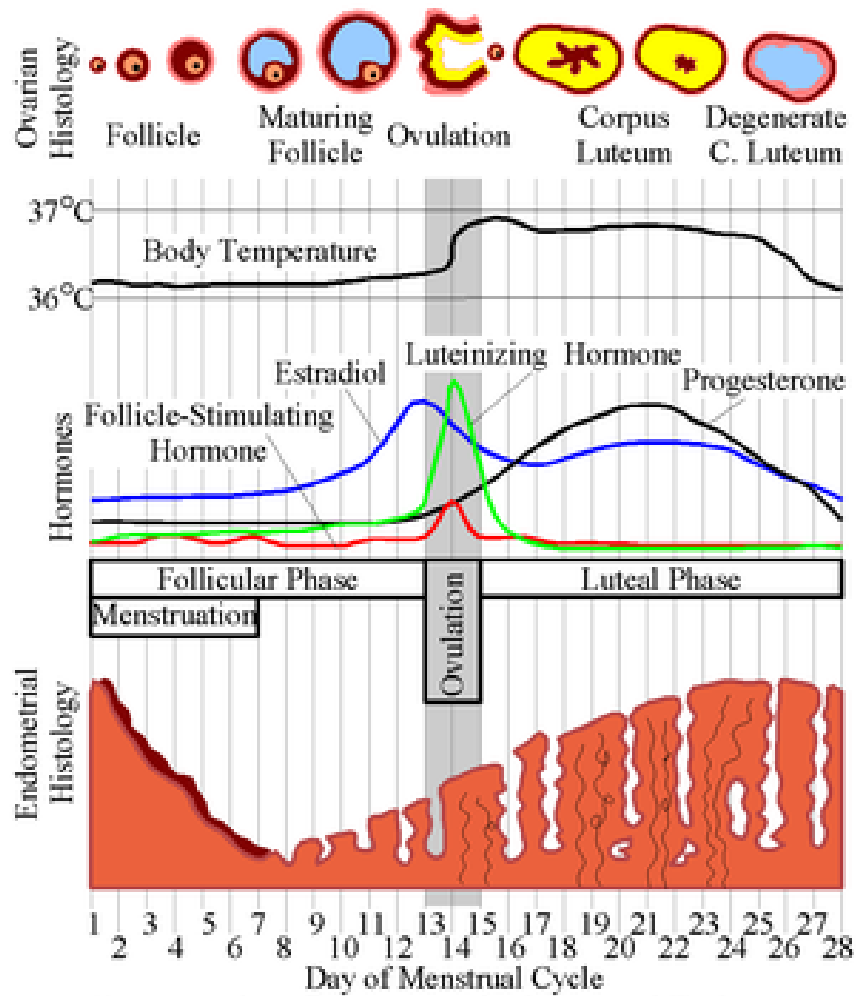
29 day cycle – ovulation occurring around Day 15



Question: When is the best time for conception? A woman's period usually lasts from 3-5 days. Torah commands that you wait 7 more days before intercourse, which puts you at day 10-12 in the woman's cycle. Of course this is the perfect window to conceive. A woman's fertile period during her menstrual cycle starts around day 13-14, with ovulation being around day 15. The egg has a short life-span of about 24 hours. Before ovulation, the cervix produces a special mucous for about 3 to 9 days. This mucous is as crucial to fertility as ovulation because without it, the male's sperm cannot survive nor be transported inside the female to fertilize the eggs. When mucous is present, it nourishes and protects sperm allowing them to live for 3 to 5 days.



Uterus shedding lining of blood

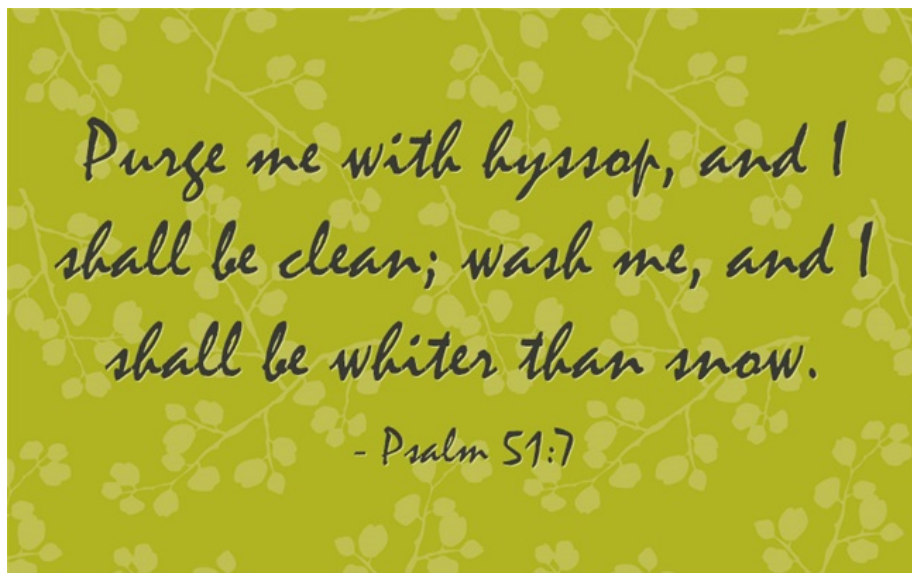


(Average values. Durations and values may differ between different females or different cycles.)

Question: What happens during the woman's menstrual cycle? In the first half of the cycle, levels of estrogen (the "female hormone") start to rise. Estrogen also makes the lining of the uterus (womb) grow and thicken. This lining of the womb is a place that will nourish the embryo if a pregnancy occurs. At the same time the lining of the womb is growing, an egg, or ovum, in one of the ovaries starts to mature. At about day 14 of an average 28-day cycle, the egg leaves the ovary. This is called ovulation. After the egg has left the ovary, it travels through the fallopian tube to the uterus. Hormone levels rise and help prepare the uterine lining for pregnancy. A woman is most likely to get pregnant during the 3 days before or on the day of ovulation. A woman becomes pregnant if the egg is fertilized by a man's sperm cell and attaches to the uterine wall. If the egg is not fertilized, it will break apart. Then, hormone levels drop, and the thickened lining (of blood) of the uterus is shed during the menstrual period.

Question: Why do women have so many mood changes? Notice the change of temperature in the body and hormone levels before ovulation.

Leviticus 15:26 Every bed on which she lies while she has a discharge will be like the bed during her *normal* period: and whatever she sits on will be unclean, just like the uncleanness during her period. 27 And whoever touches those things will be unclean and must wash his clothes and wash himself in water and be unclean until the evening. 28 But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she will count seven days and after that she will be clean. 29 And on the eighth day she will take two turtledoves or young pigeons and bring אֹתָם *them* to the priest to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. 30 And will offer the priest אֶת־ one for a חַטָּאת *sin offering* אֶת־ and the other for a burnt [offering] and the priest will make atonement for her before יְהוָה for the discharge of blood. 31 You will separate אֶת־ Children of Israel from their uncleanness, so that they will not die in their uncleanness when they defile אֶת־ My Tabernacle (*mishkan*) that is among them. 32 זֹאת This is the Torah of him who has a discharge and seminal emission that makes him unclean; 33 And of her that is sick of her menstrual impurity and of him that has a discharge, אֶת־ and of him that has an issue, of the man and of the woman and of him that lies with her that is unclean. C-MATS



Do You Know?

1. If a person was unclean, he had to live ____ the camp.
2. The unclean person could come back in the camp after he washed his ____, shaved off his ____, and bathed with ____.
3. The blood of the sacrifice and the oil brought by a person being cleansed by the priest was placed on the person's right ____, ____, and ____.
4. The priest sprinkled the oil on the person being cleansed ____ times and poured the remainder of the oil on his ____.
5. The person being cleansed could bring a clean animal that he could ____ as a sacrifice to יהוה.
6. A house is unclean if ____ or ____ mold is found in the house. (What color?)
7. When a man or woman has a bodily ____, the person is unclean.
8. When a man has an emission of semen, he is unclean until ____.
9. A man must wait ____ days after a woman's period ends before having intercourse.
10. A man must not have intercourse with his wife during her ____.

Bonus: What sins bring disease on a person? 7 sins

Answers:

1. outside
2. clothes, hair, water
3. ear, thumb, toe
4. seven, head
5. afford
6. green, red
7. discharge
8. evening
9. seven
10. period

Bonus: slander (gossip), bloodshed (murder), false oath (lying), incest, robbery, envy, pride

Haftorah

This week's Haftorah discusses the story of four men stricken by tzara'at, a skin ailment caused by sins -- one of the main topics of this week's Torah reading. Haftorah's backdrop: King Ben-Hadad of Aram besieged Samaria (the Northern Kingdom of Israel). The resulting famine was catastrophic, reducing many to cannibalism. King Jehoram of Israel wanted to execute the prophet Elisha, considering that his prayers could have prevented the entire tragedy. Elisha reassured the king that יהוה would shortly change their situation, so they would have food to eat.

2 Kings 7:3 And there were four leprous men *at the entrance of the gate*: and they said one to another, *Why do we sit here until we die?* 4 If we say, we will enter into the city, then the famine *is in the city* and we will die there: and if we sit here, we *will die also*. Now therefore, come and let us fall to the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we will live; and if they kill us, we will die anyway. 5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go to the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the outskirts of the camp of Syria, see, *there were no men there*. 6 For Adonai had made to hear אַחַח host of the Syrians a noise of chariots and a noise of horses, *even the noise of a great army*: and they said one to another, Lo, has hired against us, the king of Israel אַחַח kings of the Hittites אַחַח and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. 7 Therefore, they rose up and fled in the twilight and left אַחַח their tents אַחַח and their horses אַחַח and their donkeys, *even the camp as it was* and fled for their life. 8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drink and carried from there silver and gold and garments and went and hid *it*; and came again and entered into another tent and carried from there *also* and went and hid *it*. C-MATS



The lepers went into a tent (illustration by Charles Joseph Staniland (1838–1916))

2 Kings 7:9 Then they said one to another, We are not doing what is right: this day *is* a day of good tidings and we remain silent: if we wait until the morning light, *some* trouble will come upon us: now therefore, come that we may go and tell the king's household. 10 So they came and called to the porter of the city: and they told them saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians and see, there were no men there, neither the voice of men, but horses and donkeys were tied and the tents as they *were*. 11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within. 12 And the king rose in the night and said to his servants, I will now show you *what* אַתְּ the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *are* hungry; therefore, they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying when they come out of the city, we will catch them alive and get into the city. 13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, please, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, see, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: see, I say, they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed: and let us send and see. 14 They took therefore, two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying Go and see. 15 And they went after them to the Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned and told the king. 16 And the people went out and spoiled אַתְּ tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of יהוה. 17 And the king appointed אַתְּ the officer on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trampled upon him in the gate and he died, as the man of Elohim had said who spoke when the king came down to him. 18 And it came to pass as the man of Elohim had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel and a measure of fine flour for a shekel will be tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: 19 And answered that officer אַתְּ man of Elohim and said, Now, behold *if* יהוה should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, you will see *it* with your eyes, but will not eat of it. 20 And so it fell out to him: for the people trampled upon אַתְּ *him* in the gate and he died. C-MATS

Question: How many men with tzara'at lived outside the city? Why did they live outside the city walls? There were 4 men who lived outside the city walls, because they were unclean and could not live with the general society.

Question: What happened to the captain who doubted the prophesy Elisha gave the king about what Elohim would do? The people trampled him and killed him trying to get to the food.

Brit Chadashah

Romans 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to Elohim, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of Elohim is eternal life through Yahshua haMashiach our Adonai. C-MATS

Mark 5:24 And Yahshua went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27 When she had heard of Yahshua, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. 30 And Yahshua, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, **Who touched my clothes?** 31 And his disciples said unto him, You see the multitude thronging you, and say you, **Who touched me?** 32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he said unto her, **Daughter, your faith has made you whole; go in peace, and be whole of your plague.** C-MATS

Luke 8:42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay dying. But as he went the people thronged him. 43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchd. 45 And Yahshua said, **Who touched me?** When all denied, Peter *and they that were with him* said, Master, the multitude throng you and press you, and you say, **Who touched me?** 46 And Yahshua said, **Somebody has touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.** 47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him and how she was healed immediately. 48 And he said unto her, **Daughter, be of good comfort: your faith has made you whole; go in peace.** C-MATS

Matthew 9:20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: 21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. 22 But Y'shua turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, **Daughter, be of good comfort; your faith has made you whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.** 23 And when Y'shua came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, 24 He said unto them, **Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleeps.** And they laughed him to scorn. 25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land. C-MATS

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers Elohim will judge. C-MATS

Pride

Are you thinking you are better than others? Are you thinking your way is the best way? Do you humble yourself and do what יהוה wants you to do?

Psalms 31:23 O love יהוה אֱתֵי, all His saints: יהוה preserves the faithful and plentifully reward (pays back) him that deals proudly. 24 Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you that hope in יהוה. C-MATS

Psalms 101:5 Whosoever secretly slanders his neighbor, אִתּוֹ *him* will I destroy: Him that has a high look and a proud heart, אִתּוֹ *him* will I not endure. 6 My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me: He that walks in a perfect way, he shall minister to me. 7 He that works deceit shall not dwell within My house: He that speaks falsehood shall not be established before My eyes. C-MATS

Psalms 138:6 For though יְהוָה is high, yet has He respect to the lowly; but the haughty He knows from afar. C-MATS

Proverbs 8:12 I, wisdom have made prudence my dwelling and find out knowledge *and* discretion. 13 The יִרְאַת *fear of* יְהוָה is to hate evil: Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth, do שְׂנֵאתִי *I hate.* C-MATS

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes shame; וְאִתּוֹ *and with the* humble is wisdom. C-MATS

Proverbs 15:25 יְהוָה will root up the house of the proud; but He will establish the border of the widow. 26 Evil devices are an abomination to יְהוָה but pleasant words *are* pure. C-MATS

Proverbs 16:5 Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to יְהוָה: *Though hand joins in hand,* he shall not be unpunished. 6 By mercy וְאֵמֶת *and truth* iniquity is atoned for; and by the fear of יְהוָה men depart from evil. C-MATS

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 *Better it is to be of* a lowly spirit *with* אֶתְנָה *humble,* than to divide the spoil *with* אֶתְנָה *arrogant.* 20 He that gives heed to the word shall find good; and whoever trust in בִּיהוָה, happy is he. C-MATS

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty; and before honor *goes* humility. C-MATS

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but יְהוָה weighs the hearts. 3 To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to לִיהוָה than sacrifice. 4 A high look and a proud heart, even the lamp of the wicked, is חַטָּאת *sin.* C-MATS

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envies not; charity vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; 6 Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. C-MATS

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low; but he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor. C-MATS

Proverbs 13:10 By pride comes only contention; וְאִתּוֹ and with the well-advised is wisdom. C-MATS

2 Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of Elohim; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. C-MATS

2 Chronicles 26:16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly and he trespassed in בִּיהוָה his Elohim; for he went into the temple of יְהוָה to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him and with him fourscore priests to לִיהוָה that were valiant men: 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king and said to him, It pertained not to you, Uzziah, to burn incense to לִיהוָה, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for you have trespassed; neither shall it be for your honor from מִיהוָה Elohim. 19 Then Uzziah was angry; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was angry with the priests, the leprosy broke forth in his forehead before the priests in the House of יְהוָה, beside the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests, looked upon him and, surely, he was leprous in his forehead and they thrust him out quickly from there; yea, himself hurried also to go out, because יְהוָה had struck him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper to the day of his death and lived in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the House of יְהוָה: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging אֶת- people of the land. C-MATS

2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah was sick even to death: and he prayed to יְהוָה; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done to him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore, there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of יְהוָה came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah. C-MATS

Humility

Isaiah 2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be brought low and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down and יְהוָה alone shall be exalted in that day. C-MATS

Isaiah 13:11 And I will punish the world for *their* evil and the wicked for their iniquity: and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. C-MATS

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to Elohim. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to Elohim, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of Adonai, and he shall lift you up. C-MATS

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, be you all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing. C-MATS

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for Elohim resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of Elohim, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you. C-MATS

Selfishness

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of Elohim. C-MATS

James 3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. C-MATS

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things (interests), but every man also on the things (interests) of others. C-MATS

Give Your Best

In the times of the Temple, a person who spoke badly about other people would get a bad skin disease. The Torah tells us what he would have to do to get cured. One of the things would be to bring the Kohanim, the Hebrew priests, a gift to offer to יהוה. But not everybody had to bring the same kind of gift. יהוה knew that it would be harder for poor people to bring a big expensive gift. So he told them to bring just a small one and He would consider it as good as if it was a big one. We see from here that sometimes we expect different things from different people depending upon who they are and what they have to give.

'A' FOR EFFORT

Teddy and Simon were brothers, but you would never know it. Teddy was a real "brain," an A student who was always near the top of his class, without even trying. Simon was a nice kid. But even though he tried hard, his grades were usually nothing special, to say the least. On report card day the boys came running into the house with their report cards: "Look Mom -- almost all A's ... as usual," said Teddy. Simon shyly handed his mom his report card. While it wasn't nearly as good as his brother's, it was his best report card ever. "You both did wonderful," their mother exclaimed. "I'm going to call your father at work and tell him." The boys ran outside to play. That evening when their dad came home he had two gift-wrapped boxes in his hand. He called over the boys. When Teddy opened his gift he saw a new pen. When Simon opened his, he saw a new super-chrono watch. "Congratulations on your special report cards," their Dad said, smiling. Teddy started turning red. Finally he couldn't control himself and burst out, "It's not fair! Why should Simon get a better prize than me? I got a better report card than he did." His parents frowned and called Teddy into the next room to speak to him. "Teddy," his Dad said, "I can understand how you feel. But in a way, Simon's report card was even better than yours." "What do you mean?" asked Teddy. "I got mostly A's and just a couple of B's. Simon got some B's and a lot of C's." His father looked Teddy in the eyes. "You and Simon are different," he said. "יהיה gave each of you different abilities. Because you're different, Mom and I expect different things from you. Simon spent more time, and worked a lot harder on his assignments than you did. He really made the most of his abilities, and that's what counts. Do you understand, Teddy?" "I think so," he said. "If I used all of my abilities I would be able to do even better than I did -- I could get straight A's. Right?" His parents smiled as Teddy turned to leave the room. "Where ya' headed?" asked his mom. "I'm going upstairs to go do my homework, and this time give it all I've got."

Question: Why were the boys' parents more impressed with who tried harder rather than the end results? Because only our effort is something we can control. Our "natural" abilities -- such as how smart we are -- are something we are born with. So the only real measure of a person's accomplishments is whether he works hard to make the most of his abilities.

Question: If different people have different abilities and talents, can we say that "all people are created equal"? All people are not the same in every way. Some are much stronger, richer or smarter than others. But we are all equal in that we all have the equal chance to make the most of ourselves, based upon the abilities and circumstances that we do have.

Question: Who should feel better: someone who succeeds at something without trying, or someone who tries his best but fails? It might seem as if the one who succeeds has more to feel good about, after all he succeeded. But true success in life isn't measured by how much we accomplish, rather by how hard we try, so actually the one who tries his best is the real success.

Question: How can we know whether or not we are fulfilling our potential? We should ask ourselves two questions: Is what we are trying to do both worthwhile, and suited to our nature and abilities? Are we putting in our best effort? If the answer to both of these questions is 'yes,' we can be pretty confident that we are on the right track in life.

Question: A rabbi once said, 'When I stand before יהוה, He isn't going to ask me why I wasn't as great as Moses; He is going to ask me whether I was as great as myself.' What do you think that statement means? Each of us has a different potential, our own set of abilities and challenges. יהוה knows this, as He is the one who gave them to us. The rabbi was teaching that our spiritual goal is not to measure ourselves against someone else - in this case, Moses, who might well have had a greater potential than he did, but rather to measure ourselves against ourselves. That is, ask ourselves whether we are accomplishing all we can according to our unique potential. That is all that יהוה asks of us, and that is what we should ask of ourselves.

Ugly Speech

It may not seem like it, but gossiping and speaking badly about others is one of the ugliest things a person could do. In the times of the Bible this was obvious, because when someone would do it he or she would break out in an awful, ugly skin disease - as this week's Torah portion describes. Today we have to be extra careful to refrain from negative, ugly speech. Gossiping isn't good for the speaker, listener, or for the one spoken about.

THE GOOD - THE BAD - AND THE UGLY

Bus rides can be boring. After playing license-plate rummy, count-the-trucks and all the other goofy 'ride games' they knew, Amy and her sister Ann - on the way to visit their out-of-town grandma on her birthday - were plenty bored. That is, until a couple of passengers across the aisle caught their attention. It was two old ladies, chatting away a-mile-a-minute in some foreign language. Ann tapped Amy on the shoulder and gave her one of those 'check this out' looks. Her sister got the hint and the two of them fixed their eyes on what promised to be good entertainment for the rest of the trip - or until the old ladies got off, whichever came first. "Hey, what in the world do you think they're talking about so fast?" whispered Ann, with a mischievous grin. "Probably they don't even know themselves." Amy shot back, a little louder than she'd planned. "Shhh!" winced Ann. "They'll hear us."

Her sister waved her off. "Genius - if they knew English, don't you think they'd be speaking normally instead of jabbering away in that mumbo-jumbo?" The two of them broke out in giggles and the rest of the trip flew by as the two girls had a great time entertaining themselves by commenting on how ugly the old ladies were - of course, making sure each time to turn their eyes away from the ladies, who would have no idea the joke was on them. "Check out the one on the right's hairstyle - she looks just like a French Poodle," snickered Ann. "Hey, don't insult dogs!" quipped Amy. "At least Poodles don't dress in those ugly outfits that look like nineteenth century used-clothing store rejects!" As they got to the bus stop near their grandma's house, the sisters, a little disappointed that the 'show' was over, jumped out of their seats. They were giggling too hard to notice that the ladies across the aisle were slowly getting up too and the girls were already off the bus and much too far away to notice in what language the ladies thanked the bus driver. "Hi Grandma - we're here!" shouted an excited Amy. "Happy birthday to you!" Ann sing-songed right behind. "So nice to see you!" their grandmother smiled warmly. "Come on in. I'm so happy you could come." She led them to a pretty little table where she had set up some of her patented yummy cookies and some nice cold drinks.

The doorbell rang. "Oh, you girls enjoy yourselves," Grandma said. "I'll get the door. I invited two of my dearest friends to join us," she smiled. "I have to show off my beautiful, sweet grandchildren, you know." As the girls were digging in, they half-listened to their grandma greet the guests in the foyer. "How was your trip, dears?" she asked. "Well, thankfully the bus wasn't crowded, I just wish young people today spoke a bit more respectfully," sighed one of the guests, with pain in her voice. "I know what you mean," said the girls' grandmother. "Come in, it's all over now. Anyway, you'll meet my beautiful granddaughters." The three ladies came into the living room as Ann and Amy put on their best 'greet-the-guests' smiles - which quickly melted into looks of embarrassed shock. Grandma's best friends - speaking *perfect* English - were the two ladies from the bus! They had understood all the terrible things they'd said about them!!! The girls bounced on the edge of their seats, nervously waiting for the ladies to spill the beans and tell their grandma how awful they'd acted. Ann and Amy couldn't help noticing that the ladies wouldn't look them in the eyes and how quickly they would change the subject whenever Grandma started to brag about 'her beautiful, polite granddaughters.' There was no question they'd recognized them, but amazingly the whole party passed and they didn't say a word about what happened. As everyone got up to leave and Grandma got up to get the ladies' sweaters, the two girls looked at the ladies, who were now staring right at them. "Um, we're really sorry," muttered Ann. "Yeah ... and thanks for not telling Grandma," Amy added. "We learned long ago that no good ever comes from badmouthing people - even if they can't hear you," said one of the women softly. "And we hope one day soon you will too," added the other. The girls didn't say anything but they both knew in their hearts they had learned that very lesson that day and realized just how beautiful Grandma's friends were and just how ugly they themselves had been.

Question: What life lesson do you think the girls learned from what happened? One thing they learned was you can never be sure if people hear what you're saying. But even more, they learned - from how their grandmother's friends didn't speak badly about them even though they could have - how beautiful speech is what makes someone beautiful, and how gossipy speech does just the opposite.

Question: Is there anything wrong with simply listening to someone's gossip? We should never give the gossiper an audience. Even hearing and especially believing badmouthing and gossip, makes a person less spiritual and kind.

Question: Is it ever okay to speak badly about someone? There are certain exceptions - for instance if one has to warn someone about a dangerous person, etc. But these exceptions are rare and specific.

Question: The negative use of one's power of speech is one of the most destructive and anti-spiritual acts that there is. How do you understand this? Our most powerful and uniquely human ability is our power of speech. A fist can only harm someone within reach. A gun or even a bomb has limited range. But words, either spoken or written, can travel anywhere and leave a permanent impact either for good or for bad.

Question: Do you think one should be free to say whatever he wants, no matter how negative, in the name of free speech? Why or why not? Free speech means that the individual is free to apply his own values to determine whether or not something is appropriate to say. It doesn't mean that he is ethically free to say harmful and destructive words.

Question: Are harmful words really as dangerous as weapons? It is nearly impossible to overemphasize the damage that can be done with words. A physical illness or injury has its limits, but the feeling of pain and humiliation caused by words can haunt a person his entire life, and even for generations to come. Human beings are unique in that we communicate through the spoken (and written) word. Speech is our most powerful tool and must be used with only the greatest of care.

Question: Life and death are in the power of the tongue. How do you understand this statement? Even though we can't see them, words are very powerful forces. The gift of highly developed speech is a uniquely human trait and has tremendous potential both to heal and to hurt. A good word said to, or about, somebody has the power to brighten his day or lift his esteem in the eyes of his peers. But when negativity is expressed it can destroy a person's reputation and even have severe consequences on his life. As we become more spiritually aware, we grow increasingly careful how we use the awesome power of speech.

Question: Does a person have the responsibility to always speak the truth even when he or she is saying negative things about others? Certainly truth is an important value, which shouldn't be taken lightly. However, just because something is true, it does not always have to be said, and certainly truth should never be used as an excuse to damage others. In general, when it would hurt others, many things are best left unsaid. Expressions of negativity, even when true, usually do more harm than good. Besides this, we would be surprised to find out how many times negative things we perceive in others are really illusions based upon misunderstandings.

Resources:

"Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com