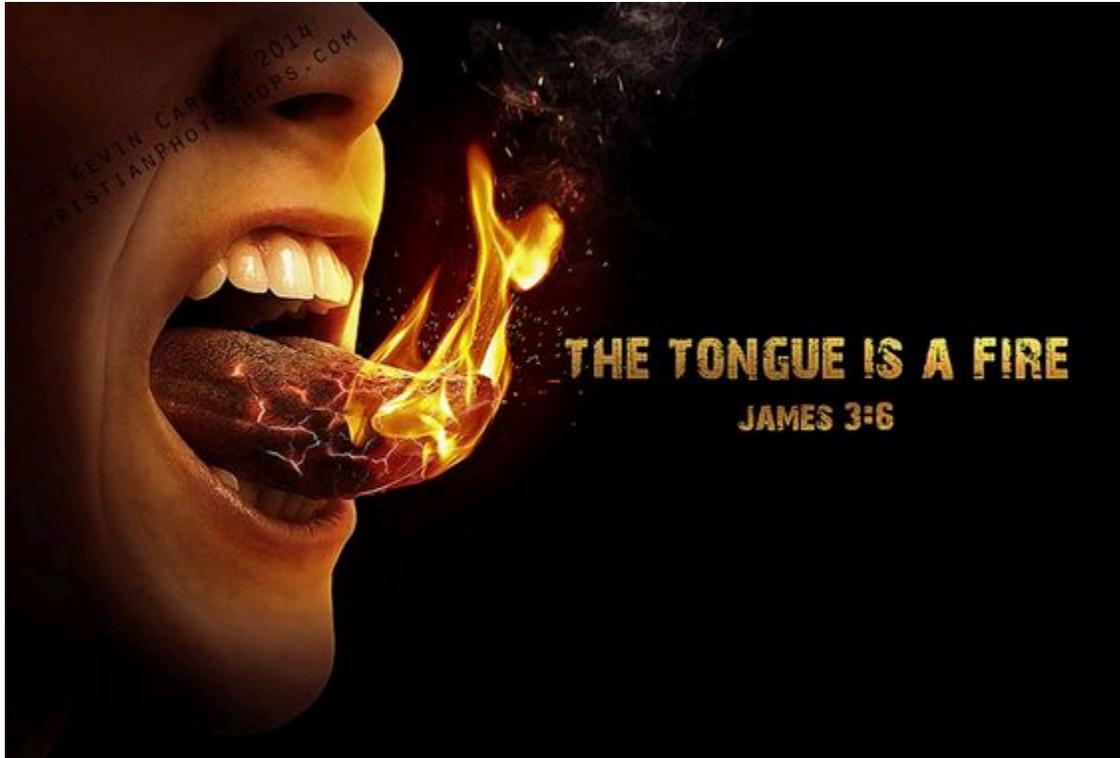


TAZRIA (she conceives)



The Torah lesson for this week is about skin diseases: *tzara'at*, but as we'll see, this external condition is really a sign of an internal moral condition.

Question: What does TAZRIA mean in English? She conceives or bearing seed

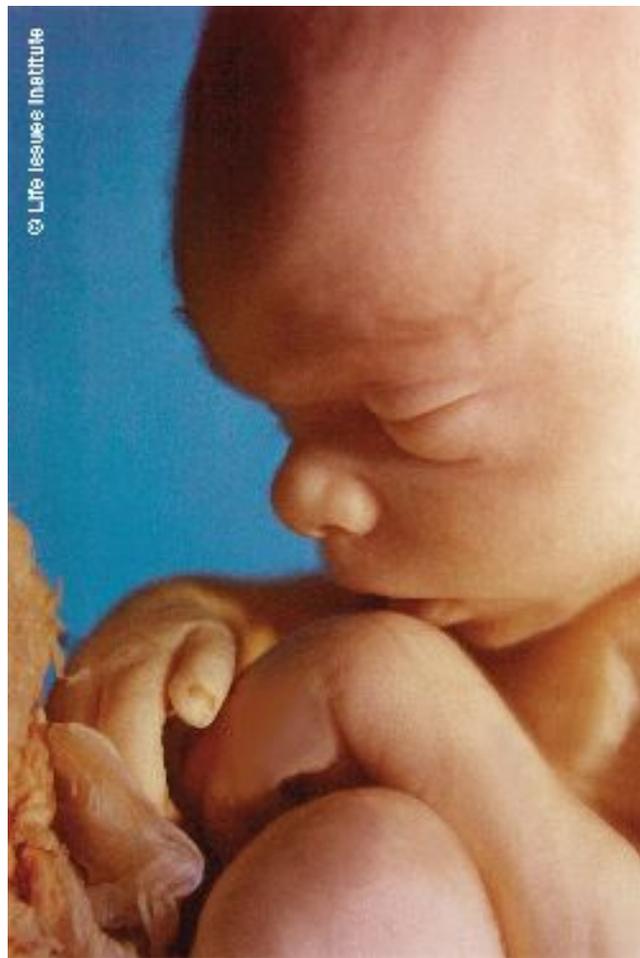
Leviticus 12:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, **2** Speak to *the* Children of Israel saying, **If a woman has conceived and given birth to a male child: then she will be unclean seven days just like when she is having her menstrual period.** C-MATS

Question: What does this mean? If the woman gives seed first, she gives birth to a male; if the man gives seed first, she gives birth to a female. *Chumash* (A sperm can live up to 3 days after intercourse.)

Question: What is the form of the embryo? At the beginning of its formation it is like the species of locust called rashon; its two eyes resemble two fly-drippings, likewise its two nostrils and two ears; its two arms are like two threads of crimson silk, its mouth is like a barley-grain, its trunk like a lentil, whilst the rest of its limbs are pressed together like a formless object, and it is with regard to this that the Psalmist said, "**Thine eyes did see my unformed substance.**" (Psalms 139:16). *Chumash*



“lentil”-size of a bean



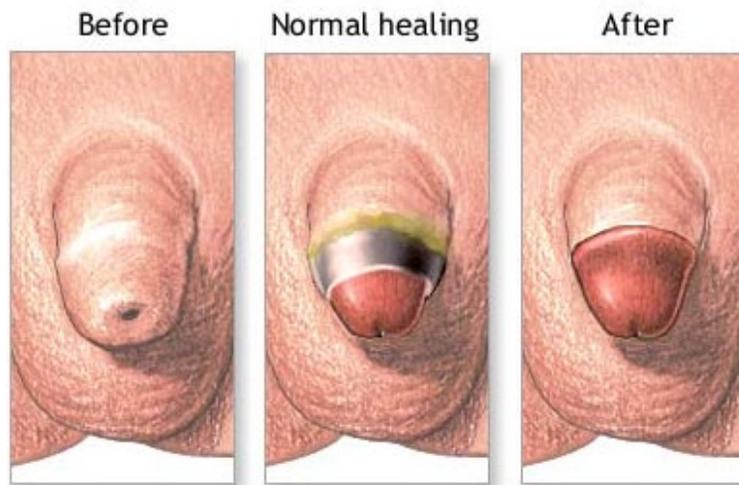
Embryo is folded up

Question: How does the embryo lie in its mother's womb? It is folded up and lying like a writing-tablet. Its head lies between its knees, its two hands rest on its temples, its two heels on its two buttocks; its mouth is closed, but its navel is open; its food is that which its mother eats, its drink is that which its mother drinks, and it does not discharge excrement lest it should kill its mother. When it issues forth into the open world, that which had been closed is opened, and that which had been open is closed. The mouth and eyes are opened and its navel is closed. *Chumash*

Question: What does it mean that the woman is unclean? Upon giving birth, a woman becomes unclean with the same regulations as those of a woman in menstruation (literally, the word niddah means someone who is "separated"). She remains separated from marital relations and may not come into the Temple to present offerings. *Chumash*

Leviticus 12:3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin will be circumcised. C-MATS

Question: When should a male child be circumcised? The Torah specifies that it be done on the eighth day -- a child must be circumcised on that day, even if it falls on the Sabbath, unless, of course, the infant's health requires a delay. *Chumash*



Leviticus 12:4 And the woman will then wait an additional 33 days to be purified from her blood; she will touch no consecrated thing, or come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification is over. **5** But if she gives birth to a female child, then she will be unclean two weeks, *just like when she is having her menstrual period:* and she will wait an additional 66 days to be purified from her blood. **6** And when the days of her purification is over for a son or daughter, she will bring a lamb in *its* first year for a burnt *offering* and a young pigeon or a turtledove **תמידי** for sin [*offering*] to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation *and give it to the priest.* C-MATS



Turtledove



Pigeon

Leviticus 12:7 Who will offer it before יהוה and make atonement for her; and she will be cleansed from the issue of her blood. **זאת** *This is the Torah* for the woman who has given birth to a male or female *child*. **8** And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she must bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons; one **לְחַטָּאת** *for sin [offering]* and the other for a sin *offering*: and the priest will make atonement for her and she will be clean. C-MATS

Question: How long is a woman unclean after she gives birth to a male child? 40 days (7 days plus 33 days) How long is a woman unclean after she gives birth to a female child? 80 days (14 days plus 66 days) The time is doubled for a female child.

Question: Why is the woman considered unclean? The commanded time of ceremonial impurity should not be regarded as a negative attitude towards birth or child-bearing on יהוה's part. יהוה *commands* child bearing, in that man is commanded to be **fruitful and multiply and fill (replenish) אֶת־ the earth** (Genesis 1:28), **children are a heritage of יהוה** (Psalm 127:3), and **אִשְׁתְּךָ** *Your wife shall be as a fruitful vine* (Psalm 128:3). The key to understanding this ceremony is to understand the idea of original sin. As wonderful as a new baby is, יהוה wanted it to be remembered that with every birth another sinner was brought into the world, and the woman was here symbolically responsible for bringing a new sinner into the world. Perhaps just as importantly, the time of ceremonial impurity gave the new mother a time of rest and seclusion that would she no doubt welcomed. Sexual contact with her husband was not allowed at this time, so the woman's body could heal before she conceived again. *Chumash*

Question: Why was a longer period of purification given for the birth of a daughter? The longer period of ceremonial uncleanness for the birth of a daughter should not be understood as a penalty. The time of impurity is for the symbolic responsibility of bringing other sinners into the world. When giving birth to a female, a mother brings a sinner into the world who will bring still other sinners into the world. Some also suggest the longer period of time in connection with the birth of a girl was because girls are usually smaller at birth, and this would allow more time for the mother's focused care and attention on the child. As well, since sons were more prized, the longer time at home for a mother with a new born girl would force the family to bond more deeply, over a more extended period of time with the new born girl. *Chumash*



The Poor Widow's Offering (illustration by Frederick Goodall)

Leviticus 13:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, 2 When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a **שאת** *lifted up of (rising)* a scab, or a bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of tzara'at (*leprosy*); then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons the priests. C-MATS

Question: Why does tzara'at come upon a person? The plague of tzara'at comes only as punishment for evil talk- speaking derogatorily of others, although he may be telling the truth. *Chumash*

Question: Why is the one with tzara'at different from all other ritually impure persons in that the Torah said, "**he will live in isolation outside the camp.**" (Leviticus 13:46)? Since, with his slander, he caused a separation [a rift] between man and wife or between man and his fellow, he too, shall be separated [from society]. *Chumash*

The ancient Rabbis argued that *tzara'at* refers not to a bodily disease but to a physical manifestation of a spiritual sickness, a punishment designed to show a wrongdoer that he must mend his ways. In other words, *tzara'at* is not so much a disease as a form of supernatural spiritual discipline. The biblical treatment of *tzara'at* was complete isolation: the person was to live outside the camp, cloak himself up to his lips, and cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" The ancient Rabbis argued that the inward cause *tzara'at* was sin, particularly anti-social sins, such as lying for selfish ends, sexual immorality, false oaths, pride, and especially slander.

Yahshua was in agreement with the other Rabbis: **Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defiles not a man. C-MATS**

Question: Why was Miriam, Moses' own sister, afflicted with *tzara'at*? Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife. (Moses married a gentile.) Miriam was the instigator that committed the sin of the evil tongue, speaking against Moses. People tend to make light of the sins of the tongue--gossip, backbiting, tale-bearing-- but יהוה takes it very, very seriously!



Miriam Shut Out from the Camp (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Leviticus 19:16 teaches: "**You will not go *about as* a talebearer among your people.**" James 4:11 repeats this commandment: "**Speak no evil one of another, brethren.**" And here is what Yahusha, our Chief Rabbi, says, in **Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.** Our words have the power either to build up or to tear down. With our words, we can edify, building up trust and respect and community, or can destroy, tearing down reputation and relationships and spiritual intimacy.

Discuss: Since skin disease is punishment for deeds spoken and done that everyone can see, is cancer a punishment for a man whose heart is turned against יהוה, since it is a disease that cannot be seen?

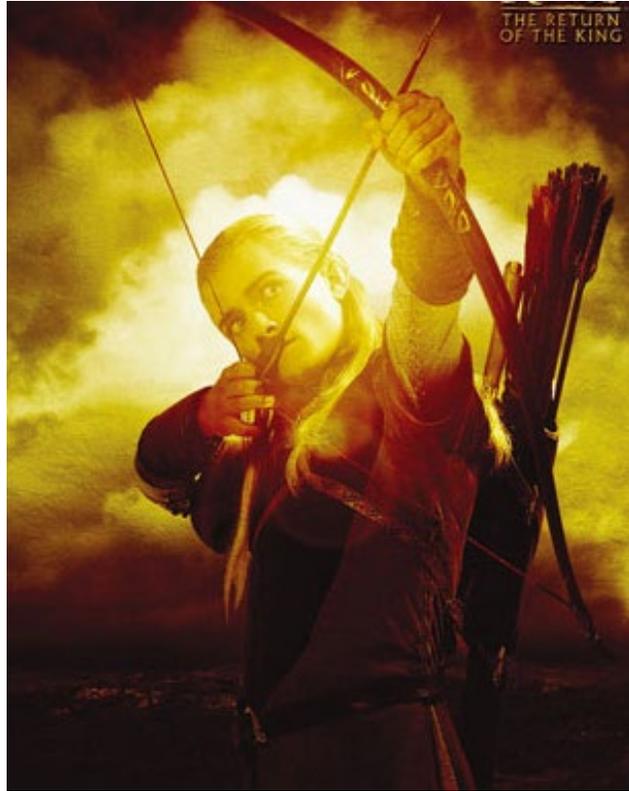
Question: What's so bad about a little gossip? On the surface it might seem pretty harmless; after all it's only words. But our words are much more powerful than we realize. The right word can save someone's life, and the wrong word can ruin it. Words influence the way we feel about other, with impressions that can last forever. The way a person speaks reveals who he is, and has a bigger spiritual affect on himself and others than almost anything else.

Question: How far should we go to avoid gossip and negative comments about others? The right thing to do is to avoid this type of speech, even if what we are saying is true, even if everybody knows already, even if people pressure us to tell, even if the person is right in front of us, even if we say it as a joke, even if we're just speaking generally about a certain group and even if the other guy spoke badly about us first.

Discuss: Should we speak derogatorily about groups of people as a whole? Baptists? Nerds? Doctors? Is this stereo-typing others? Is this pleasing to יהוה?

Discuss: Is teasing ever appropriate- even among friends? Isn't there always truth in teasing that can hurt someone's feelings?





Evil talk is like an arrow. A person who unsheathes a sword can regret his intention and return it to its sheath. But the arrow cannot be retrieved.

Evil talk kills three people: the speaker, the listener, and the one who is spoken of.



Question: The speaker obviously commits a grave sin by speaking negatively of his fellow. The listener, too, is a partner to this evil. But why is the one who is spoken of affected by their deed? Are his negative traits worsened by the fact that they are spoken of? By speaking negatively of the person's trait or deed, the evil speakers are, in effect, defining it as such; with their words, they grant substance and validity to its negative potential and make it more apparent and real to the person trying to overcome the trait thus discouraging the person and making him weak. But the same applies in the reverse: speaking favorably of another, accentuating his or her positive side, will aid him to realize himself in the manner that you have defined him. He will be encouraged and become strong. *Chumash*

Question: Should you speak evil about yourself-tearing yourself down in front of others? A man once came to see the rabbi and proceeded to portray himself as a villain of the worst sort. After describing at length his moral and spiritual deficiencies, he begged the rabbi to help him overcome his evil character. "Surely," said the rabbi, "you know how grave is the sin of speaking evilly of a human being. Nowhere, to my knowledge, does it say that it is permissible to speak evilly about oneself." *Chumash*

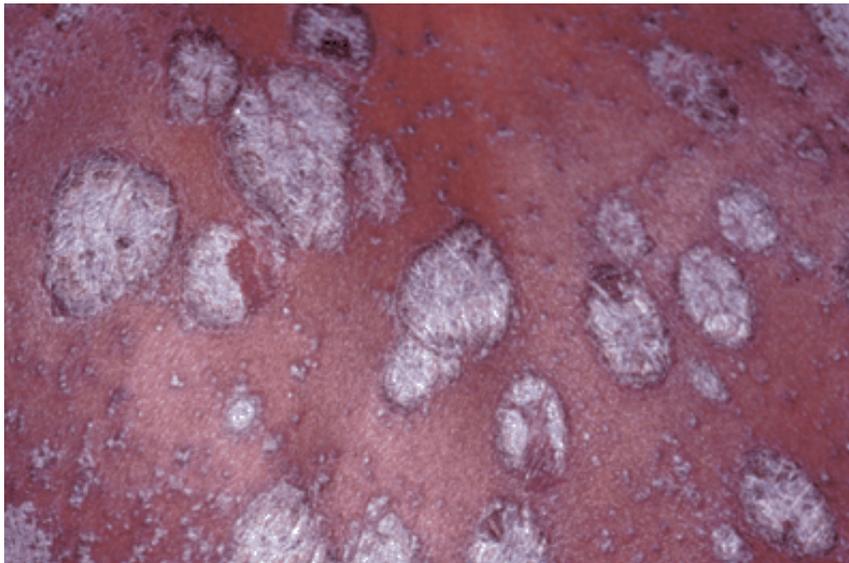
Question: How can guarding our tongue protect us from difficulties and danger? Besides the practical effect of keeping our foot out of our mouth and helping us get along better with the people around us, being careful how we speak creates a very powerful spiritual weapon as well. Since *יהוה* treats us measure for measure, like how we behave down here, 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.



Do not listen to gossip.

Question: Granted that speaking badly of others is bad news, but is there anything wrong with just listening to this kind of talk? In a sense, making oneself an audience for gossip and put-downs is just as bad or worse than saying them ourselves. Besides enabling the gossiper to do his damage, after all no one speaks unless there's someone to listen, it is our listening and especially our believing the bad things being said that ruin people's reputations and cause the damage to be done. Also, hearing these types of things also poison our mind, and make us more likely to speak the same way in the future. The right and ethical thing to do is to steer clear of gossip and gossipers whenever and however we can.

Spiritual Exercise: Use your tongue today to build up others and not speak negatively about anyone.



Leviticus 13:3 And will examine the priest **את** the sore on his skin: and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore *appears to go deep* into the skin, it is a plague of tzara'at: and the priest will examine him and pronounce **אתו** him unclean. 4 If *the bright spot is white* on his skin and it appears not to go deep into the skin and the hair in it has not turned white; then the priest will isolate *him who has את* the plague (sore) for seven days. C-MATS

Question: What is the first symptom of Tzara'at? The first symptom of tzara'at is a white patch on the skin, which must be at least the size of a large bean that has been estimated to be 3/4-inch square. *Chumash*

Question: Who inflicts us with sickness? Leviticus 13:3-4 show us that **את** Yahusha is the one that inflicts sickness on His covenant children as judgment from sin and it is also clear from Leviticus 13:17 that **את** Yahusha is also our healer. We can see these characteristics confirmed in Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I, even I, am He and there is no god with Me: I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. And also Isaiah 45:7 I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I **יהוה** do all these things. C-MATS

Leviticus 13:5 And the priest will examine him on the seventh day: and *if* the sore has not changed in appearance and the sore has not spread on the skin; then the priest will isolate him *for* seven more days: 6 And the priest will examine **אתו** *him* again on the seventh day: and *if* the sore *is* somewhat dark and the sore has not spread on the skin, the priest will pronounce him clean: it *is* *only* a scab: and he will wash his clothes and be clean. 7 But if the scab spreads further on the skin, after that he has been examined by the priest and declared clean, he will be examined by the priest again: 8 And *if* the priest sees that the scab *has* spread on the skin, then the priest will pronounce him unclean: it *is* tzara'at. C-MATS

Question: The Hebrew priests wouldn't judge whether a person had a spiritual sickness called tzara'at until they had examined him twice. יהוה judges us the way we judge others. What do you think this means? Almost anything a person does has both positive and negative aspects. If I do someone a favor it might be partly out of a genuine desire to help, and partly because I want him to do me a favor some day. יהוה knows that, and He will choose to focus on the positive or negative parts of us and our actions to the exact degree that we choose to focus on the positive or negative aspects of others. If we want יהוה to give us the benefit of the doubt, all we have to do is start giving the benefit of the doubt to others.

Question: The proper way to relate to a new person we meet is to simultaneously respect and suspect him. What do you think this means and why might such an approach be wise? When we meet someone new, we have no way of really knowing what he's about. Some people make a great first impression and turn out to be monsters, others look bad but are really good as gold. Therefore, until we know someone and are able to decide what he's truly like; respecting him gives us the chance to make a close connection, while suspecting him protects us from getting burned.

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.'

Spiritual Exercise: Do not judge others by their appearance. Give them a chance first.

Leviticus 13:9 When the plague of tzara'at is on a man, then he will be brought to the priest; 10 and the priest shall see *him*: and, behold, *if* **שאת** *lifted up (rising) be* white in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there be quick raw flesh **שאת** *lifted up (rising)*; 11 It *is* a chronic tzara'at on the skin and the priest will pronounce him unclean **ואתם** *and you will not isolate him: because he is unclean.* 12 And if tzara'at (*leprosy*) breaks out on the skin and covers the tzara'at **אח** *all the skin from his head to his feet, or wherever the priest looks.* C-MATS

Question: Why would a priest pronounce someone clean who is covered in the infection from head to feet? Someone whose entire skin has turned white is so morally corrupt that he is too convinced of his righteousness to think of changing. There is no point, therefore, in continuing to isolate him. But by telling him, in effect, that it has lost hope for his ability to improve, the Torah shows him dramatically how low he has sunk. *Chumash*

Leviticus 13:13 Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, has covered the tzara'at **את** all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean *that has את* the plague: *if it has* all turned white: he is clean. C-MATS

Question: Why is *tzara'at* translated as leprosy in some translations of the bible? Though outwardly, *tzara'at* would seem to be a mysterious skin disease, inwardly, it reveals something about the human condition, from יהוה's point of view. Some older translations refer to these skin conditions as *leprosy*, and the NIV translates it as *infectious skin disease*, but these translations are misleading. First of all, the symptoms described in this passage-- with much emphasis on small white patches-- simply do not correspond to any symptoms of leprosy or commonly called Hansen's disease. Secondly, in Torah the Cohen or priest inspects the affected skin after a week, but Hansen's disease progresses much too slowly to see a difference in a week. Thirdly, Torah has a very strange prescription for a total outbreak of *tzara'at*: In verse 13 this is a pretty amazing paradox: if a person is totally covered, then he is totally clean! Now this certainly makes little medical sense, right? Yet it is actually a hint about the spiritual nature of the problem.



Man with leprosy

Question: What is leprosy? **Leprosy**, also known as **Hansen's disease**, is a long-term infection by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae*. Initially, a person who is infected does not have symptoms and typically remains this way for 5 to 20 years. Symptoms that develop include granulomas of the nerves, respiratory tract, skin, and eyes. This may result in a lack of ability to feel pain, which can lead to the loss of parts of extremities due to repeated injuries or infection due to unnoticed wounds.

Leviticus 13:14 But when inflamed flesh appears on him, he will be unclean. **15** And will examine the priest **את** the flesh inflamed and pronounce him unclean: *because* the inflamed flesh *is* unclean: *it is* tzara'at. **16** Or if the inflamed flesh turns again and is changed to white, he will come to the priest; **17** And the priest will examine him: and *if* the sores have turned white; then the priest will pronounce him clean *who has את* the plague: *he is* clean. C-MATS



Boil

Leviticus 13:18 If the man has a boil on his skin that heals, 19 And there be in the place of the boil a **אֵשֶׁת** lifted up (rising) white or a bright spot, white, and somewhat reddish, and it shall be showed to the priest; 20 And when the priest examines it, if it is appears to be lower than the skin around it and the hair in it has turned white; the priest will pronounce him unclean: it is a plague of tzara'at broken out from the boil. 21 But if the priest examines it and there are no white hairs in it and it does not appear lower than the skin, but is somewhat dark; then the priest will isolate him for seven days: 22 And if it spreads across the skin, then the priest will pronounce **אָרַח** him unclean: it is a plague. 23 But if the bright spot stays in the same place and does not spread, it is a scar of the boil; and the priest will pronounce him clean. C-MATS



Burn

Leviticus 13:24 Or if a man has a burn on his skin caused by fire and *the inflamed flesh* where it was burned has a reddish-white or white bright spot; 25 Then the priest will examine **אתה** *it (him)*: and *if* the hair in the bright spot has turned white and it appears deeper than the skin; it is tzara'at broken out from the burn: the priest will pronounce **אתי** *him* unclean: it is the plague of tzara'at. 26 But if the priest examines it and *there is* no white hair on the bright spot and it is no lower than the other skin, but *is* somewhat dark; then the priest will shut him up *for* seven days: 27 And the priest will examine him *on* the seventh day: *and* if it has spread across the skin, then the priest will pronounce **אתי** *him* unclean: it is the plague of tzara'at. 28 And if the bright spot stay in his place, *and* spread not in the skin, but it be somewhat dark; it is a **שאת** *lifted up (rising)* of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean: for it is an inflammation of the burning. C-MATS



Sore on the head

Leviticus 13:29 If a man or woman have a sore upon the head or beard; 30 Then shall examine the priest **את** the sore: and *if it* appears deeper than the skin; *and* in it is a yellow thin hair; then the priest will pronounce **אתי** *him* unclean: it is a crusted area, tzara'at on the head or beard. 31 But if examines the priest **את** *the* diseased crusted area and *it appears* deeper than the skin and *there is* no black hair in it; then the priest will isolate *the man who has* **את** *the* diseased crusted area *for* seven days: 32 And shall examine the priest **את** the sore on the seventh day and if the crusted area has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it and the crusted area appears not to be deeper than the skin; 33 He will be shaven, **ואת** *and* the crusted area he will not shave; and the priest will isolate *him who has* **את** the crusted area *for* seven more days: 34 And shall examine the priest **את** the crusted area on the seventh day and *if* the crusted area has not spread on the skin and does not appear deeper than the skin; then the priest will pronounce **אתי** *him* clean: and he will wash his clothes and be clean. 35 But if the crusted area spreads on the skin after he has been declared clean; 36 Then the priest will examine him: and *if* the crusted area has spread on the skin, the priest will look for a yellow hair; he *is* unclean. 37 But if the crusted area has not changed its appearance and a black hair has grown in it; the crusted area has healed, he *is* clean: and the priest will pronounce him clean. C-MATS

Question: What is black hair a sign of? Thus, if there was black hair inside it, he is clean and does not require quarantine, for black hair in a sign of cleanness.

Leviticus 13:38 If a man or a woman has on his skin bright spots, white bright spots; **39** Then the priest will examine *him*: and *if the bright spots on the skin are dull white; they are freckled spots that grow on the skin; he is clean.* **40** And the man whose hair has fallen off his head, he is bald; *but he is clean.* C-MATS

Question: How will you know if you have Tzara'at? Any undesirable change in someone's physical or economic circumstances -- even if it is only a relatively minor inconvenience-- should be taken as a possible punishment for sin, and the victim should seek guidance in determining where he has fallen short and how he can improve himself. One who suffers **יהוה's** apparent displeasure should never dismiss his discomfort as inconsequential. You must always question yourself and your deeds, and take reverses as a sign from **יהוה** that he must remedy his way. **יהוה** begins by inflicting minor pain, but if that is not taken to heart, much worse may come.

Discuss: If we begin to have problems with finances or health, how do we know if judgment has come upon us?

Leviticus 13:41 And if his hair fallen off from the front part of his head, he is forehead bald: *but he is clean.* **42** And if there is a white reddish sore on the bald head or forehead; it is a tzara'at breaking out on his bald head or forehead. C-MATS



Bald head with infection

Leviticus 13:43 Then the priest will examine **אתו** *it (him)*: and *if **שאה** lifted up (rising) is reddish-white on his bald head or forehead, appearing like tzara'at on the rest of the skin.* C-MATS

Question: How is the punishment of a bald man as compared to someone with hair? When the merciful **יהוה** punishes a person, He prefers to do so in a way that will not cause him public humiliation. Let the sinner know and repent, but let him not be humiliated unnecessarily. The tzara'at of baldness is different. Its location is such that everyone sees the affliction and knows that **יהוה** has withheld His mercy from the sinner. Apparently, he has sinned in a grievous manner, as is implied by the Torah's description of him as a person with tzara'at. *Chumash*

Leviticus 13:44 He *is* a leprous man, he *is* unclean: the priest will pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague *is* on his head. **45** And the leper who has the plague must tear his clothes and uncover his head and cover his mustache and cry, unclean, unclean. C-MATS

Question: What must the man with tzara'at do? He must dress and act like a mourner, to influence him to grieve and repent the behavior that brought the punishment of tzara'at. It was customary for a mourner to pull his collar or scarf over his lips and to pull his cloak over his head and to tear his garments and to grow his hair long. He was also forbidden to greet people, but he was permitted to study and discuss the Torah. He must warn others of his affliction by calling out “**unclean, unclean**” to inform others of his anguish so that they will pray for him. *Chumash*

Leviticus 13:46 As long as he has sores, he will be defiled; he *is* unclean: he will live in isolation outside the camp. C-MATS



The diseased person is sent away from the camp

Question: Why is a man with tzara'at singled out to live in isolation? Because his affliction is a punishment for slander, which causes husbands to be separated from their wives and friends from one another. Therefore it is fitting that he be punished through isolation from society. The ultimate purpose of "a punishment that fits the crime" is to make the sinner aware of what he did and what it has brought upon him. Such reflection should lead him to repent. *Chumash*

Leviticus 13:47 When the plague of tzara'at inflects a garment, *whether it is a woolen or linen garment.* C-MATS

Question: How did יהוה afflict a man's possessions if he was in sin? Afflictions on garments and houses are not natural phenomena. They appeared only during the time when the Hebrew nation was generally in perfect accord with יהוה and was a fitting host to His Presence. When an individual would fall into sin and was no longer worthy of this exalted rank, then יהוה would signal this fall by afflicting his possessions with ugly discolorations. *Chumash*

Leviticus 13:48 Whether *it is* on the threads or woven in parts of linen *or* wool; whether on a hide or anything made of leather; 49 And *if* the stain is greenish or reddish on the garment or a hide, woven in, or threads, or in anything of leather; *it is* a plague of tzara'at and will be shown to אֵת the priest: 50 And shall examine the priest אֵת the stain and isolate *the garment that has* אֵת the plague *for* seven days: 51 And he will examine אֵת the stain on the seventh day: if the stain has spread on the garment, whether in the woven in, threads, hide, *or* anything that *is* made of leather; the infection is tzara'at; *it is* unclean. 52 He will burn אֵת that garment, whether אֵת woven in parts or אֵת threads in wool or linen, or אֵת anything *made* of leather, which has the stain: for *it is* a contagious tzara'at; it must be burned up *completely* in the fire. C-MATS

Question: What suffering does the owner of the contaminated possessions receive? The owner suffers the "pain" of a monetary loss when the garment is destroyed. Since the item is burned without any use being made of it, it has been cursed. *Chumash*

Leviticus 13:53 And if the priest examines it and the stain has not spread in the garment, whether in the woven in parts or in the threads, or in anything of leather; 54 Then the priest will command that they wash *the garment* אֵת which has the plague and he will isolate it *for* seven more days: 55 And the priest will examine it after *he has* washed אֵת the stain but *if* has not changed the stain אֵת its color and has not spread; *it is* unclean; you will burn it *completely* in the fire; *it is* rotten, *whether* it is on the inside or outside. 56 And if the priest sees the stain appears dark after washing אֵתוּ it (*him*) then he shall tear אֵתוּ it (*him*); from the garment *the stain* out of or hide or threads or woven parts: 57 And if it appears again in the garment, whether in the woven in parts, threads, or anything of leather; it is contagious: you will burn אֵת that *garment* which *has* the stain with fire. 58 And if the stain has left *from* the garment that you washed, whether woven in parts, or threads, or anything of leather, then it will be washed a second time and will be clean. 59 זֹאת This is the Torah concerning inflections of tzara'at in a garment of wool or linen, whether *in* the woven in parts or threads or anything of leather, when to pronounce it clean or unclean. C-MATS

Do you know?

1. What does Tazria mean in English?
2. A male child is circumcised on the ____ day.
3. A woman who has given birth to a male child is unclean for ____ days.
4. A woman who has given birth to a female child is unclean for ____ days.
5. Skin disease is found on a person that has spoken ____ against his neighbor.
6. We should never listen to ____.
7. If a priest is unsure if someone has **tzara'at**, what does he do and for how long?
8. How many times did a priest examine a person before he pronounced him unclean?
9. Do not judge others by their first _____. Give them a chance.
10. The effects of sin can show up in your financial, mental, social, or _____ condition.
11. The unclean person must tear his ____, cover his __ and ____, and cry "____, ____."
12. The unclean person was placed in isolation _____ the camp.

Answers:

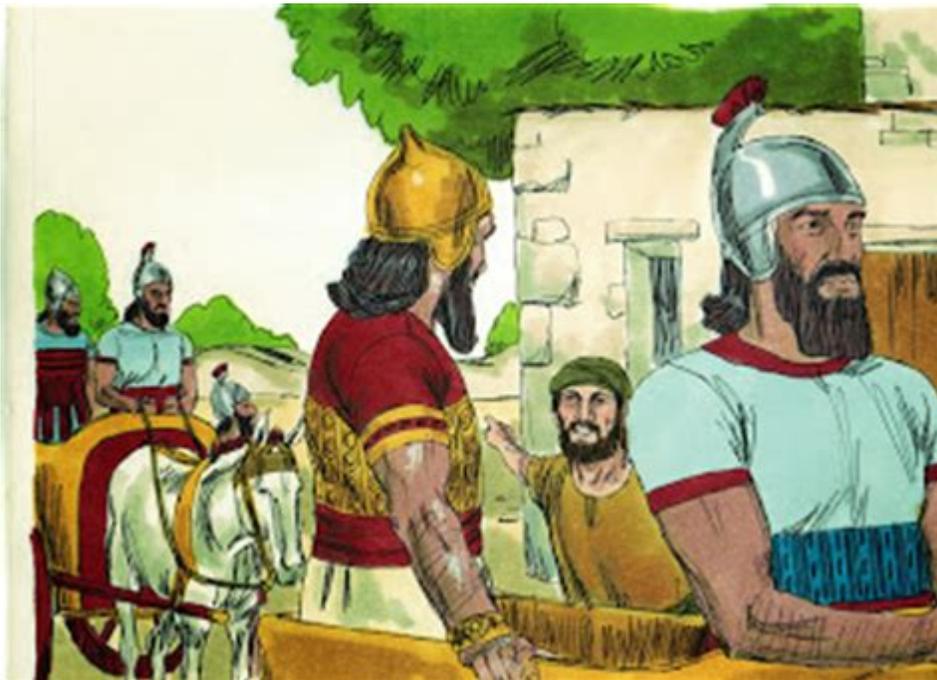
1. She conceives or bearing seed
2. 8th
3. 40
4. 80
5. slander
6. gossip
7. puts him in isolation for 7 days to check if disease has spread
8. twice
9. appearance
10. physical
11. clothes, head and mouth, unclean, unclean
12. outside

Haftorah

This week's Haftorah describes how a prophet miraculously cured an Aramite general of his tzara'at ailment.

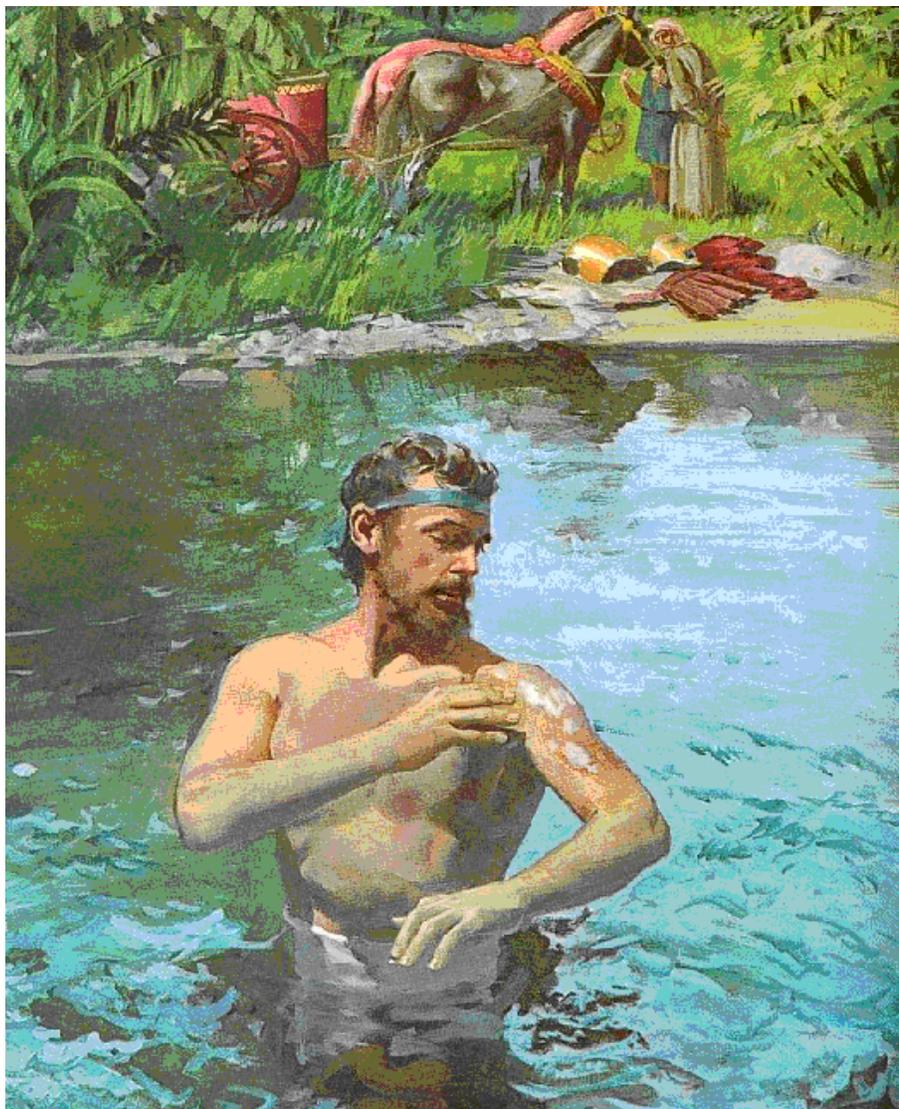
2 Kings 2:42 And there came a man from Baal-shalisha and brought the man of Elohim bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and full ears of corn in the husk of it. And he said, Give to the people that they may eat. **43** And his servant said, What **אתך** shall I give this to hundred men? He said again, Give to the people that they may eat for so says יהוה, they will eat and have some left. **44** So he set *it* before them and they ate and had some left, according to the word of יהוה. C-MATS

2 Kings 5:1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and honorable, because by him יהוה had given deliverance to Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, *but he was* a leper. **2** And the Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a young female; and she waited on Naaman's אשת wife. **3** And she said to her mistress, Would to Elohim my master were with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! He would heal אתך him of his tzara'at (*leprosy*). **4** And one went in and told his master, saying, So and so said, The maid that *is* of the land of Israel. **5** And the king of Syria said, Go now and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. And he departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of garments. **6** And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying now when this letter is come to you, See, I have with it sent to you את Naaman my servant, that you may recover him of his tzara'at. **7** And it came to pass, when *he* had read, the king of Israel את the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, Am I Elohim, to kill and to make alive, that this *man* does send to me to recover a man of his tzara'at? Therefore, consider, please and see how he seeks a quarrel against me. C-MATS



Elisha's messenger tells Naaman to wash in the Jordan River

2 Kings 5:8 And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of Elohim had heard that *he* had rent, the king of Israel אֶת his clothes that he sent to the king saying therefore, *Why* have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times and your flesh will come again to you and you will be clean. 11 But Naaman was furious and went away and said, See, אִמְרָתִי *I said* he would certainly come out to me and stand and call on the name of יהוה his Elohim and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper. 12 *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near and spoke to him and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid you *to do some* great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much more then, when he said to you, Wash and become clean? C-MATS



Naaman is healed in the Jordan River

2 Kings 5:14 Then he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of Elohim: and his flesh came again like to the flesh of a little child and he was clean. 15 And he returned to the man of Elohim, he and all his company and came and stood before him: and he said, See, now I know that *there is* no Elohim in all earth, but in Israel: now therefore, please, take a blessing **גִּזְרֵת** from your servant. 16 But he said, *As יהוה* lives, before which I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused. 17 And Naaman said, Will there not then, please, be given to your servant two mules loaded with dirt? For your servant will never again offer neither burnt *offering* nor sacrifice to other gods, but to ליהוה. 18 In this thing יהוה pardon your servant, *that* when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there and he leans on my hand and I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon: When I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, יהוה pardon your servant in this thing. 19 And he said to him, Go in peace. So he departed **גִּזְרֵתוֹ** from him a little way. C-MATS

Question: Who was Naaman? Captain of the host of the king of Syria.

Question: Why was Naaman annoyed with Elisha? Naaman considered himself a very important man and entitled to an elaborate show when he arrived. Elisha did not even come out to meet him, so he was insulted and left. Who changed Naaman's mind? His servants

Brit Chadasha

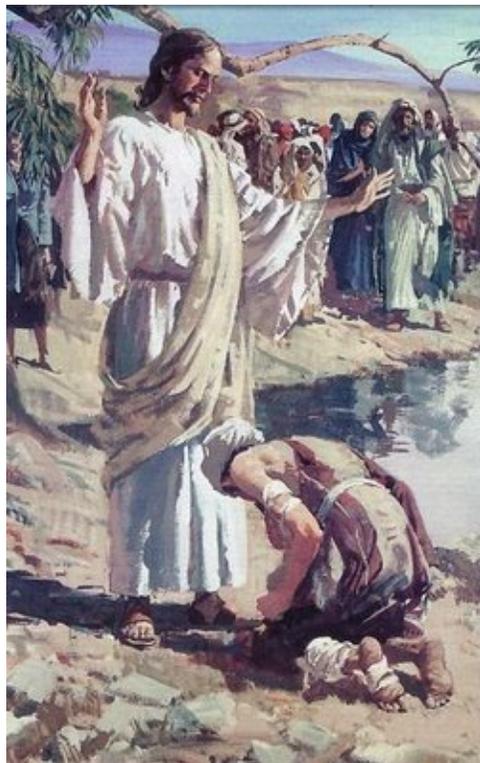
Question: Can Yahusha make you clean? Matthew 8:1 When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Master, if you will, you can make me clean. 3 And Yahusha put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, **I will; be you clean.** And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Yahusha saith unto him, **See you tell no man; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.** C-MATS

Mark 1:40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If you will, you can make me clean. 41 And Yahusha, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, **I will; be you clean.** 42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43 And he straightly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44 And saith unto him, **See you say nothing to any man: but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.** 45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Yahusha could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter. C-MATS

Luke 5:12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Yahusha fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Adonai, if you will, you can make me clean. 13 And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, **I will: be you clean.** And immediately the leprosy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: **but go, and show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.** 15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. 16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed. C-MATS

Question: What are the signs that Yahusha was the Mashiach? **Matthew 11:2** Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Mashiach, he sent two of his disciples, **3** And said unto him, Are you he that should come, or do we look for another? **4** Yahusha answered and said unto them, **Go and show John again those things which you do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. C-MATS**

Luke 7:18 And the disciples of John showed him of all these things. **19** And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Yahusha, saying, Are you he that should come? or look we for another? **20** When the men came unto him, they said, John the Baptizer has sent us unto you, saying, Are you he that should come? or look we for another? **21** And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. **22** Then Yahusha answering said unto them, **Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. 23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. C-MATS**



Yahshua heals the man with tzara'at



Question: Who can tame the tongue? James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain. James 3:2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of Gehenna. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we Elohim, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of Elohim. 10 Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. C-MATS (Only the Holy Spirit can tame the tongue.)

Question: How can you love others? Galatians 5: For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the Torah is fulfilled in one word, even in this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another. C-MATS (Beware of ruining each other.)

1 Peter 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of יהוה are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of יהוה is against them that do evil. C-MATS

Psalms 15:1 יהוה, who shall dwell in Your Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Your Holy Hill? 2 He that walks uprightly and works righteousness and speaks אמת *truth* in his heart; 3 He that slanders not with his tongue, nor does evil to his friend, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor. C-MATS

Psalms 34:11 Come, you children, listen to me: I will teach you the אמת *fear of יהוה*. 12 What man is he that desires life and loves *many* days that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. 15 The eyes of יהוה are toward the righteous and His ears are *open* to their cry. C-MATS

Psalms 52:2 Your tongue devises very wickedness, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. 3 אמת *You loved evil more than good and lying rather than to speak righteousness*. Selah 4 אמת *You loved all devouring words, O you deceitful tongue*. 5 Elohim will likewise destroy you forever; He will take you up and pluck you out of your tent and root you out of the land of the living. C-MATS

Proverbs 6:16 There are six things which יהוה hates; yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue and hands that shed innocent blood; 18 A heart that devises wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that utters lies and he that sows discord among brethren. C-MATS

Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words there transgression is not absent; but he that refrains his lips does wisely. 20 The tongue of the righteous is *as* choice silver: The heart of the wicked is little worth. 21 The lips of the righteous feed many; but the foolish die for lack of understanding. C-MATS

Proverbs 10:31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom; but the perverse tongue shall be cut off. 32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked speaks perverseness. (wickedness) C-MATS

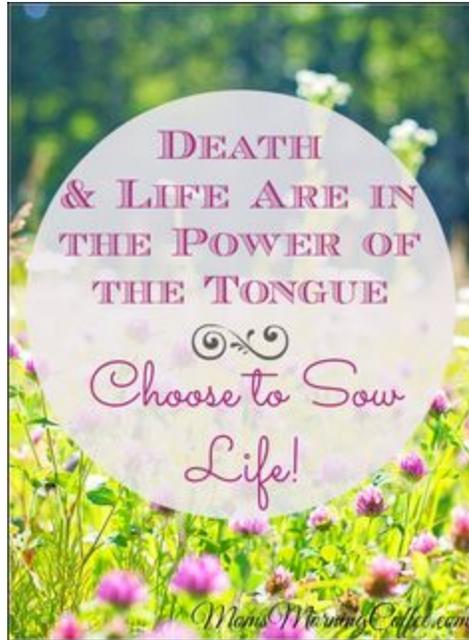
Proverbs 12:18 There is that speaks rashly like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health. 19 The lip of אמת *truth* shall be established forever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment. C-MATS

Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise utters knowledge properly; but the mouth of fools pour out folly. 3 The eyes of יהוה are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good. 4 A gentle tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit. C-MATS

Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise; when he shuts his lips, he is esteemed as prudent. C-MATS

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit there. C-MATS

Proverbs 21:23 Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles.



Judge Fairly

A wise person doesn't judge people or things by the way they first appear. In this week's Torah portion, we learn how the Hebrew priests wouldn't judge whether a person had a spiritual sickness called tzara'at until they had examined him twice. We can learn from this that one should be willing to give people and situations a 'second look' before passing judgment about them.

A FAIR HEARING

I don't know why, but I sort of took it on myself to be the neighborhood 'welcoming committee.' Whenever a new kid moves in and shows up on the scene, I make the effort to say 'hello' and help her blend in with the crowd. So it really wasn't unusual for me to go up to this new kid, Allison, (I asked one of the teachers what her name was) and give her one of my smiley 'welcome to the neighborhood' speeches. What *was* unusual was how the kid reacted to me - or should I say *didn't* react... "Hi Allison!" I had said to her in a loud, friendly voice, walking up to her from behind. The kid didn't say anything or even turn her head. Okay, I know some kids are the more shy, quiet type (not like me!) so I figured I'd try again. "Welcome to the world's greatest neighborhood!" I said, in a big friendly voice - sure this time she'd turn around and smile. But she didn't even turn around and just kept on walking away from me, I think even faster than before. If there is one thing I can't stand it's a snob.

And this Allison kid just made it into my book as Snob #1. As far as I was concerned, she could just stay by herself forever, if that's how she wanted it. I certainly wasn't going to be the one to make her feel at home. The next day when I saw her sitting on a bench in the playground looking really lonely, my first thought was, 'it serves her right!' After all, I gave her the chance to make a friend and she obviously didn't want to see my face. I walked past her, about to join the gang, when –

I don't know why - something about her lonely look got to me and I figured maybe she just had a bad day yesterday and what would it hurt to give her one more chance? Things aren't always the way they first look. So I walked back her way, only this time I made sure to walk straight up to her, so if she wanted to do her 'snob' thing again, she'd have to do it right to my face. "Hi," I said, giving her a little wave. I thought she'd either turn her head or look embarrassed after yesterday, but this surprising kid surprised me once again by giving me a warm, friendly smile back and inviting me to sit down! We traded names (I knew hers already, but it was only polite) and soon we got chatting friendly enough that I felt okay to ask her why she hadn't answered me back the day before. But before I could do that, she gave me the answer in a way that made me glad I hadn't asked... "Oh, Christiana," she said "I'm sorry, but could you please make sure you look straight at me when you talk. You see," she smiled sort of uncomfortably "I'm hearing impaired and I have to read people's lips to have any idea what they're saying and to see their faces to even know if they're talking to me at all." Wow - that explained everything! She didn't ignore me because she was a snob or even shy. She just didn't hear or notice me because I never caught her eye! Well, Allie and I are just about best friends now. She's a great, down to earth kid. I think a lot about how close I came to writing her off as a snob - which would have been a big shame for both of us, and how glad I am that I was smart enough to give her a second look.

Question: Is there ever a time we shouldn't judge someone favorably? The Torah has specific guidelines about when we should and when we shouldn't, and we'll gain a lot by learning these. But a good general rule of thumb is to try to give people the benefit of the doubt whenever we can.

Question: What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story? Often, our first impressions of people or situations can be inaccurate. A wise person is willing to withhold judgment and give things a second look.

Question: Can we ever be sure that how we look at things is true? While it's smart not to jump to conclusion and to give people and things a second look, that doesn't mean we can't understand how things are or rightfully decide that they're true. יהוה put definite truths in the world and gave us the ability to perceive them when we honestly try.

The Secret Weapon

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. This week's Torah portion teaches how at one time, יהוה would give people a special type of warning when they were speaking improperly, so they could correct themselves. Today, we must rely on paying careful attention to what we say, and trying our best to use the 'secret weapon' of our tongues, to speak only good and bring good things into our lives.

"SWEET TOOTH"

Sometimes you meet people in the strangest places. For instance, who would have thought that the dentist's office could turn into a school reunion? Well I certainly didn't, as I sat in Dr. Cushing's waiting room last Wednesday afternoon. Despite my toothache, I was starting to relax to the mellow music playing in the background, and about to dive into one of my favorite magazines as I waited for my appointment. Suddenly I heard a familiar sounding voice speaking to the receptionist. I looked up, and got a real blast from the past.

"Sherry Leavitt, is that really you?!" I cried out. My old school friend wheeled around, and after a few seconds of trying to recognize me, got the picture and flashed me a smile so bright that it made me wonder what she was doing at the dentist at all. "Hey Fran," she said, "I can't believe it. Did you move back to town?" I laughed. "No such luck, I just came in for this dentist's appointment. My mom always says that if you find a good dentist, you don't give him up even if you have to travel half-way around the world." I eagerly sat down next to my old friend who I hadn't seen in a couple of years and put down what I was reading. Surely the latest gossip from the old neighborhood would be much more interesting than anything the magazine had to offer.

Sherry had only come in for a check-up and cleaning, and was really happy to see me. She spoke animatedly about the weather, what she has been learning in school and books. But every time I would bring up a name from the old days, and inquire about the latest juicy news, Fran seemed to look uncomfortable and tried to change the subject. What was going on? Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. "Sherry, are you hiding something from me?" I burst out. "I've been waiting two years to hear something juicy, and now all you can tell me is that everyone's fine?" My friend looked at me and said something that I don't think I'll ever forget. "Well, you see Fran, lately, I've decided not to talk so much about other people. It seems as if almost always, somehow or other, something gets said that's embarrassing or hurtful. So I try to find less dangerous things to speak about." By now, my mouth was open so wide that I had forgotten about my toothache. I felt kind of disappointed to realize I wasn't going to be getting any gossip, but I guess I could see her point. Any gossip worth listening to had to have at least a little dirt in it. But there was one thing I still didn't get... "Sherry, what do you mean about speaking about 'dangerous' things?" I asked. "Well I mean, I learned that when we hold back from saying anything bad about other people, יהוה brings good things - into our lives, the life of who we're talking to, and the person we didn't gossip about. Good things that we wouldn't want to miss out on. I figure that's worth giving up a juicy bit of gossip for, don't you?" I certainly couldn't argue with her there. "Have you seen it help?" I asked.

Sherry smiled. "I can't say for sure, but I can tell you that since I stopped gossiping or putting anybody down, I've seen a lot of good things come into my life. But even more than that, I feel like it's made me into a nicer, better person." Maybe it was Sherry's words, or her winning smile, but somehow I knew she was right. As I put my hand up to my sore tooth, I decided then and there to pay more attention not only to what I put into my mouth from now on, but also what would come out of my mouth as well.

Question: Why being put in quarantine was a good way to cure someone of *tzara'at*, the gossip disease? When a person is by himself he can think about why he shouldn't speak that way. Also he can feel how important it is to be with other people and why we shouldn't isolate ourselves from others by speaking badly about them.

Question: There is an expression, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Based on our story and discussion would you agree or disagree with this? It's not true. Words can hurt a lot. Even though it's not physical pain, the emotional pain can sometimes be even worse.

Question: Do you think there's anything wrong with saying bad things about people if you know it's true? Just because something is true, we don't have to gossip about it. Besides, it's possible that we really didn't get our facts straight, and it's not really true. The world will become a better place if we use our power of speech to build others up and not to put them down.

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