

## Drash on Parashat Metzora

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Parashat Metzora is found about a third of the way through the third Book of the Torah, Vayikra (Leviticus in English). The Jewish name of the book means *And He [God] Called* and the English name means *law of priests* with etymology starting in Latin continuing back through Greek and ending in rabbinic Hebrew. Indeed, this Book records God's instructions to Moses apparently received after the Tabernacle was consecrated and before the Israelites departed from Mount Sinai.

The name of this parashat is derived from the ninth Hebrew word (but first distinctive word) meaning *one being diseased*. To provide the customary summation of the entire parashat, I quote Wikipedia:

**The parashah deals with ritual impurity. It addresses cleansing from skin disease (tзара'at), houses with an eruptive plague, male genital discharges, and menstruation.**

Discerning what The LORD wanted brought out for this drash was much easier than for my previous efforts. We will begin with the Torah reading.

Yah-a-mod, Autumn bat Lamuel.

Autumn will bless us with the Hebrew and English of Leviticus 14:1-7 (TLV):

<sup>1</sup> Then ADONAI spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> "This is the *Torah* of the one with *tza'arat* in the day of his cleansing. He should be brought to the *kohen*,<sup>3</sup> and the *kohen* is to go to the outside of the camp. The *kohen* is to examine him, and behold, if the mark of *tza'arat* is healed in one with *tza'arat*,<sup>4</sup> then the *kohen* is to command that two clean living birds, cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop be brought for the one being cleansed.<sup>5</sup> The *kohen* should command them to kill one of the birds in a clay pot over living water.<sup>6</sup> As for the living bird, he is to take it, the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them with the living bird into the blood of the bird that was killed over the living water.<sup>7</sup> He is to sprinkle on the one being cleansed from the *tza'arat* seven times and pronounce him clean, then release the living bird over the open field.

Does this procedure sound to you like something Harry Potter might preside over? Perhaps not, since it is not curative, not changing the person's physical condition. Note this is just the start of the process—there are 25 more verses and eight days to go before the already healed patient has been completely transitioned into a normal life within the community. This process was apparently decreed to deal with non-physical aspects of the healing and involves life and death. The Torah does not explain why the situation must be addressed in this manner. You will be neither the first nor the last person to wonder why this is necessary, why these elements are required, and so forth. We will probably not learn the definitive answers before the Messiah returns. However, we can surely guess. It is likely a majority of those who have wondered about these things believe much symbolism is on display here.

I perceived The LORD wants us to consider the *living water* component today, which is *mayim chayim* in Hebrew—one noun and one modifier in both languages, although it is sometimes translated *water of life* as well.

A person that believes water isn't very important in the scheme of things is quite an oddity. Of course, it is often very easy to take water for granted and not think about it much. Throw out wondering if it's going to rain or if there is enough hot water to bathe, and in these parts we might not think about water at all. Nonetheless we are quite aware of the importance of adequate clean water to our continued existence and are glad of those who do think about such matters regularly so we don't have to.

Historically water has always been important to people such that it is considered to be fundamental to the universe and often worthy of homage as a deity. It is unlikely cultures we read about in the Scriptures had the benefit of scientific study such as we have been blessed with in recent times. Now we know a molecule of water is normally composed of three atoms: two hydrogen and one oxygen. Fascinatingly, two mems bracketing one yud is how water is spelled in Hebrew (*Eevreet* in Hebrew), perhaps the language of Creation. We also know a lot about water's involvement in the chemistry of life, both plant and animal, especially its interactions with another atom, carbon. Did you know our bodies are more water than anything else? We are physically 50-60% water, depending on many factors, particularly age. Even bones are almost one third water while internal organs and skin are in the neighborhood of three fourths water. And blood? That's about four fifths water, with plasma at 92%.

Clearly water is of life as we know it. But living water seems to imply something even more profound. The Hebraic *chayim* is usually translated into English as the gerundive form of the verb *to live*; that is, *living*. This indicates the noun of the adjective is currently alive. Science does not accept the concept of water being alive, nor I expect have most folks throughout history. If, however, stones can shout out, as Yeshua believes according to the Tree of Life Version of Luke 19:40, who knows what water might be capable of? Nonetheless, such behavior has apparently never been observed, certainly not under laboratory conditions. So this translation is unfortunate from a physical standpoint, but knocks it out of the park from a poetic point of view.

Now, within the context of this parashat, we must inquire: what water qualifies as living and what water does not? Well, there are two primary schools of thought in play. One thinks the absence of toxins is the point, the other thinks movement is what matters. Most agree precipitation and springs both natural and supernatural are surely living water and what is in the Dead Sea is surely not, but sea water and wells dug by people give rise to contention. In this parashat, however, only the kohen's opinion is germane. If he accepts the water as living, all's well. By the way, Wikipedia's discussion of the [History of Hydrologic Cycle Theory](#) ascribes some understanding of the water cycle to the authors of certain citations from *Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, and other Biblical texts. It is safe to say the editors of Wikipedia do not consider God to be the author.

In this cleansing procedure Autumn read for us, the living water is widely understood to be mixed with the living blood of the no longer living bird, even though the text does not state mixing is expected. Why do I say living blood? [This is Leviticus—some discussion of blood is mandatory.] Yes, it is true platelets are not considered cells and it can be argued red blood cells are never technically alive, having no cell nucleus, thus no DNA, thus no reproductive capacity. Nonetheless, *white* blood cells have nuclei and both red and white cells can easily live throughout the scenario this reading presents. Plus, the Torah that posits living water also (in the next contiguous parashat) proclaims "*the life of the flesh is in the blood*" [Lev 17:11 and first stated in Gen 9:4]. Moreover, the first mention of blood in the

Torah is God telling Cain the voice of his dead brother's blood *is* [present tense] crying out to Him from the ground [Gen 3:10]. Certainly we can justify the concept of living blood even if the Torah doesn't explicitly say so. By the way, notice that proclamation about the life of the flesh ignores life *not* having flesh and blood—all botanical and lower-order zoological species. We might conclude their life is in their *water*. Regardless, there is no prohibition about consuming their water, nor the water of flesh, as long as that flesh is Biblically categorized as food, Biblically clean, and has been separated from its blood. Also, do you realize most marine zoological species including whales cannot drink water? They can only eat it in their food. It may have been a bass that originally lamented, "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

We must now move on to the symbolism of the *living water* concept. However, The Spirit is not leading me to guide you though all the theories about what living water represents nor to even catalog them. You can and should do that for yourselves. My focus is on the observation that this concept catches people's imaginations. Those words trigger a resonance within us we find attractive, desirable, and we may even become aware of a deep thirst for whatever living water is. Intuitively we grasp it is sacred, somehow more of God than non-living water. In comparison, *Holy Water* does not come close to engendering these states of mind. I do not think there is only one symbolic meaning God wants us to grasp. In fact, all theories may be valid to some extent. Nonetheless, the most profound symbolism of living water involves The Messiah and The Ruach.

Yah-a-mod, Elaine bat Benyahmeen Moshay.

Consider these words of Yeshua from John 4:13-14 and 7:37-38 as well as John's vision in Revelation 22:1-2 (note these New Covenant Scriptures are well-rooted in the Tenach, especially all of Ezekiel chapter 47):

**4:13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."**

**7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Yeshua stood up and cried out loudly, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.**

**38 Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now He said this about the Ruach, whom those who trusted in Him were going to receive; for the Ruach was not yet given, since Yeshua was not yet glorified.**

**22:1 Then the angel showed me a river of the water of life—bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the city's street. On either side of the river was a tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**

This water imparts eternal life and provides for the healing of the nations. Remember Yeshua is our example, that we are to be conformed to His Image, that we should be just like Him; indeed, doing even greater works than He did in the first century.

"The Spirit and The Bride say, 'Come'" ("Bo" in *Evreet*). I paraphrase that as "Be there!" Both now, with rivers of living water flowing out of you into those around you, and into eternity.

The next parashat is not contiguous. It is *Pesach* and covers Exodus chapter 12 verses 21 through 51 and Numbers chapter 28 verses 16 through 25—nothing in Leviticus but you can expect blood will be mentioned. We'll pick up where we're leaving off in Leviticus the week after that.