

Torah: Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:1 – 13:59
Haftarah: Malakhim Bet (2 Kings) 4:42-5:19
B’rit Hadashah: Luke 17:11-19

	<i>Yr. 1 12:1-13:39</i>	<i>Yr. 2 13:29-59</i>	<i>Yr. 3 14:33-15:33</i>
1	12:1 – 4	13:29-34	14:33-38
2	12:5 – 8	13:35-39	14:39-47
3	13:1 – 5	13:40-42	14:48-53
4	13:6 – 17	13:43-46	14:54-15:7
5	13:18 – 23	13:47-50	15:8-15
6	13:24 – 28	13:51-54	15:16-28
7	13:29 – 39	13:55-59	15:29-33

when and a man or a woman [has an] infection on [the] head or in [the] beard	<i>ve'ish o isháh kiy yiheyé vo nága' be'rosh o ve'zaqan</i>	וְאִישׁ אִו אִשָּׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה בּוֹ נֶגַע בְּרֹאשׁ אִו בְּזָקָן:
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This week we read more about ritual purity and the role of the priests regarding maladies of the skin and home: an affliction call *tzara'at* (צָרַעַת). This is often translated “leprosy” but it is clearly not, as it also can affect clothes, buildings, etc.

The Haftarah is the story of Na’aman, commander of the army of the king of Aram who suffered from *tzara'at*. He is healed through his own humility in response to an enslaved Hebrew servant and Elisha’s instructions.

Year 1 Aliyah Highlights

- Le. 13:29-34 Sore on head/beard:** Hair is rooted in layers of the skin. The term translated as “crusted” (*ne-teq* – נִתְקָה) is only found here (Le. 13-14). Its verbal form means “to tear apart” (Le. 22:24, Ecc. 4:12). Reference to yellow and black hair describe progressive stages that require monitoring. Shaving and time add clarity. No progression of the malady receives a declaration of “clean” (*te-har* – טָהַר).
- Le. 13:35-39** Any progression after examination receives a declaration of “unclean” (*ta-me* – טָמֵא). **Skin rash** (*bo'haq* – בִּהַק) is another malady (vitiligo?).
- Le. 13:40-42 Tzara'at** (צָרַעַת) of the scalp. For a specific example, see 2Ch. 26:19.
- Le. 13:43-46** The treatment for one who is declared unclean: torn clothes, unbound hair, cover upper lip, cry, “unclean, unclean.” He must live in isolation and outside the camp, possibly permanently (e.g. 2Ki. 15:5)
- Le. 13:47-50 Tzara'at** in fabrics and leather. Priests are the examiners.
- Le. 13:51-54** Seventh day reexamination. Destruction or further isolation.
- Le. 13:55-59** Further examination of garments parallel the symptoms of the human disease.

Food for Thought

Tzara'at and Lashon Ha'ra (evil tounge): The sages make this connection through the narrative of Miriyam’s criticism of Moshe and subsequent case of *tzara'at* (Nu. 12). There is no specific consequence in Torah for speaking against another, including against leaders, although its effect can destroy community. The role of the priesthood is to examine the infected persons, clothing, homes and objects not as a medical professional but as a spiritual guide. What if he were to raise the possible reason for *tzara'at* as *lashon ha'ra*, inquiring what has gone wrong and what needs to be done to fix the situation both physically and spiritually?

Finding relevance in the Obscure: It is difficult to understand reason and relevance for some of the content in this portion. It has been said that a “statute of Torah” (*khu-qat ha'torah* – חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה) such as the Red Heifer (Nu. 19:2) are commandments (*mitzvot* – מִצְוֹת) without a reason, that they are to be observed without understanding, in pure devotion and allegiance to HaShem. Rabbis say that even Shlomo (Solomon) did not understand the Red Heifer. But can we find understanding and relevance for today in this text? Perhaps what is required is not blind obedience, rather being human, using our God-given faculties to search for deeper meaning, to try and understand what the Torah wants from us while not undermining obedience/observance. A part of our relationship with HaShem is to accept that our understanding is, in fact, limited, and to cultivate humility, knowing that we worship the God who created the vast and incomprehensible universe. Yet in our acts of service and obedience we might find HaShem’s purpose, discovering as much as we can about the world in which we live. This is not just religious behavior, but a journey of discovery finding Torah within our human experience. And when we find ourselves suffering in this experience, we can ask not why we are suffering, but what do we now do. In the end, we are not looking for the final answer that close the book on subjects such as clean/unclean, but how to apply Torah to our daily lives.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (12:2) What do you learn from observing the process of “birth?” What happens when man’s activity and God’s timing intersect? (Job 10:12, Isa 66:9, Jer 29:11, Psa 40:1-3, Act 1:6-8)
2. (13:6) Have you ever been given a second chance? Have you given someone a second chance? (Joh 18:18, Joh 21:9, Isa 1:18, Mic 6:2-8, Rev 7:13-17)
3. (13:30) What is difference between discernment and judgment? What standards do you apply when discerning situations? (Deu 19:15-21, 1Ti 5:19-20, Isa 3:10, Mat 8:4, Mat 7:1, Mat 7:15-20, Gal 5:22-23)
4. (13:38) Is a determination of tzara’at final? Can God reach through and cleans areas of your life? The lives of others? (2Ki 5:9-14, Psa 144:5-7, Mat 14:35-36, Mat 8:2-3)
5. (13:55) The Hebrew word for “washing” (הִכְבִּישׁ) indicates repeated, frequent washing - the owner has tried over and over again to remove the stain. How does this apply to sin in our lives? (Isa 1:18, 1Jo 1:7, Heb 9:22, Rev 7:13-15, Zec 3:3-5, Rev 22:14, Mat 22:11-14)