



Sh'mini - Eighth- Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Haftorah – 2 Sam 6:1-7:17

B'rit Hadashah- Hebrews 7:1-19

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Ritual Purity- What Is It?

Parshah Overview: ¹

On the **eighth day**, following the seven days of their inauguration, Aaron and his sons begin to officiate as *kohanim*(priests); a **fire** issues forth from G-d to consume the offerings on the altar, and the **divine presence** comes to dwell in the Sanctuary.

Aaron's two elder sons, **Nadav and Avihu**, offer a “strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not” and die before G-d. Aaron is **silent** in face of his tragedy. Moses and Aaron subsequently disagree as to a point of law regarding the offerings, but **Moses concedes to Aaron** that Aaron is in the right.

G-d commands the **kosher** laws, identifying the animal species permissible and forbidden for consumption. Land animals may be eaten only if they have **split hooves** and also **chew their cud**; fish must have **fins and scales**; a list of non-kosher birds is given, and a list of kosher insects (four types of locusts).

Also in Shemini are some of the laws of **ritual purity**, including the purifying power of the **mikvah** (a pool of water meeting specified qualifications) and the **wellspring**. Thus the people of Israel are enjoined to “**differentiate** between the impure and the pure.”

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Ritual Purity²

Dr. Susan Handelman - One of the most widely misunderstood concepts in the Torah is contained in the words *tum'ah* and *taharah*. Translated as “unclean” and “clean,” or “impure” and “pure,” *tum'ah* and *taharah*—and, by extension, the laws of *niddah* and Family Purity—often evoke a negative response. Why, it is asked, must a woman be stigmatized as *tamei*, “impure”? Why should she be made to feel inferior about the natural processes of her body?

It might be said that, at bottom, these objections arise from a fundamental misunderstanding. *Tum'ah* and *taharah* are, above all, spiritual and not physical concepts.

The laws of *tum'ah*, *niddah* and *mikvah* belong to the category of commandments in the Torah known as *chukkim*—Divine “decrees” for which no reason is given. They are not logically comprehensible, like the laws against robbery or murder, or those **In essence, *tum'ah*, “spiritual impurity,” is definable as the “absence of holiness”** commandments that serve as memorials to events in our national past such as Passover and Sukkot. The laws of *tum'ah* and *taharah* are supra-rational, “above” reason. And it is precisely because they are of such high spiritual level, beyond what intellect can comprehend, that they affect an elevated part of the soul, a part of the soul that transcends reason entirely.¹

But even if the human mind can't understand these Divine decrees logically, we can nevertheless try to understand them spiritually and search for their inner meaning and significance. In this endeavor, the teachings of chassidic philosophy are of invaluable aid, for the study of Chassidut reveals the inner aspect of Torah, its “soul,” and can guide us through realms where unaided human intellect cannot reach. Chassidism strives for the direct perception of G-dliness underlying everything, and illuminates the spiritual sources of all physical phenomena.

***Tumah* As the Absence of Holiness**

Chassidic teaching explains that in essence, *tum'ah*, “spiritual impurity,” is definable as the “absence of holiness.” Holiness is called “life,” “vitality”; it is that which is united with and emanates from the source of all life, the Creator. Chassidic philosophy further elucidates that true union with G-d, true holiness, means that one's own independent existence is in a state of *bittul*, “nullification” to G-d.² On the other hand, that which is distant or separated from its source is called “death” and “impurity.” According to Torah law, death is the principal cause of all *tum'ah*; the highest magnitude of *tum'ah* comes from contact with a dead body.

The forces of evil are, in kabbalistic and chassidic terminology, the *sitra achara*, the “other side.” They are what is “outside,” what is far from G-d's presence and holiness. They flourish in the realm where He is most concealed and least felt, where there is least holiness. In a place

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where G-d is least felt, there is naturally more room for “opposition” to Him. **Spiritually speaking, what is most evil and most impure in a person is, above all, the assertion of self: one pushes G-d’s presence away and creates a void, a vacuum where His presence should be.**

That is the deeper meaning, according to chassidic teaching, of the phrase “to cause a *chilul Hashem*,” to desecrate G-d’s name: it means to make a *chalal* (void), a place empty of His presence. **Holiness is synonymous with *bittul***: it has no sense of any true existence independent of G-d. That is why, our sages tell us, **arrogance is equivalent to idolatry—for idolatry, in essence, means that something is regarded as independent of the Creator and asserts itself in place of Him.**

Hence, if we strip the words “pure” and “impure” of their physical connotations, and perceive their true spiritual meaning, we see that what they really signify is the presence or absence of holiness.

An Important Distinction Between Two Types of *Tum’ah*

At this point we must ask: why must *tum’ah* exist at all? What purpose can it have in G-d’s creation?

“The Almighty has created one thing opposite the other,” the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us, and as chassidic teaching interprets this verse, everything in the realm of holiness has its counterpart in the realm of unholiness.

Only through its struggles here can the soul rise higher

On the one hand, these opposing realms are created so that we may have “free choice” in our behavior. On a deeper level, as Chassidism explains, when we reject the evil and choose the good and, moreover, when we further transform the evil itself into good, we effect an elevation not only in ourselves but in the entire world, bringing it closer to its ultimate perfection.

Holiness & Purity The Torah Walk in Messiah

As believers, we have been called to be set apart. This is what holiness is about and that is what Torah is about, to be set apart as a light shining in darkness.

We are not our own, we were bought and paid for by the blood of Yeshua. This booklet is to help you learn what the walk of holiness looks like.

Our Heavenly Father is a Holy God and we are called to be a holy/Kadosh set apart peculiar people. Holy in Hebrew is Qadash or Kadosh. Qadash is a great word on sanctification and majestic cleanliness, it means.

□ **To keep pure and clean, that which is destined for sacred use-The garments of the Priesthood were holy set apart garments. Exodus 29:21**

Exo 29:21 Also you are to take some of the blood that is on the altar, along with the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments, and on his sons and their garments. In this way he and his garments are to be consecrated, along with his sons and their garments.

□ **Shaul/Paul said our bodies presented to Ha Adonai/The Lord should be kept clean-Romans 12:1-2**

Rom 12:1 I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable to God—which is your spiritual service.

Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

□ **To be regarded and treated holy – Leviticus 22:32**

Lev 22:32 You must not profane My holy Name, for I will be made holy among Bnei-Yisrael. I am Adonai who makes you holy,

□ **To be consecrated – Exodus 29:43**

Exo 29:43 I will meet with Bnei-Yisrael there. So it will be sanctified by My glory.

Exo 29:44 So I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar. I will also sanctify Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as kohanim.

Exo 29:45 So I will dwell among Bnei-Yisrael and be their God.

□ **To consecrate with rites, or to dedicate with ceremony – The Firstborn belong to Adonai Exodus 13:2**

Exo 13:2 “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, from every womb of Bnei-Yisrael, both men and animals—this is Mine.”

□ **To pronounce holy – Jeremiah 1:5 – Adonai does the pronouncing and calls people into His Service**

Jer 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I set you apart—I appointed you prophet to the nations.”

- **Greek – Hagiamos-Holiness, sanctification, separation To YHWH, the result-conduct befitting those separated**
- **Greek-Hagios- Dedicated To YHWH. In scripture in its moral and spiritual significance-separated from sin and therefore consecrated to YHWH**

Holiness G42 (Greek)

ἁγιωσύνη

hagiōsunē

Thayer Definition:

- 1) majesty, holiness
- 2) moral purity

Part of Speech: noun feminine

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: from G40

Citing in TDNT: 1:114, 14

Holiness H6944 (Hebrew)

קֹדֶשׁ

qôdesh

BDB Definition:

- 1) apartness, holiness, sacredness, separateness
- 1a) apartness, sacredness, holiness
- 1a1) of God
- 1a2) of places
- 1a3) of things
- 1b) set-apartness, separateness

Part of Speech: noun masculine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from H6942

Same Word by TWOT Number: 1990a

The Holiness Of YHWH/G-d

Throughout scripture, God declares His Holiness and His demand for holiness from His people. He deserves no less from us.

Exodus 15:11

Exo 15:11 Who is like You, Adonai, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, awesome in praises, doing wonders?

1 Samuel 6:20

1Sa 6:20 So the men of Beth-shemesh asked, “Who is able to stand before Adonai—this holy God? To whom should it go up from us?”

Psalm 18:27-32

Psa 18:27 With the pure You are pure, and with the crooked You are shrewd.

Psa 18:28 For You save lowly people, but haughty eyes You humble.

Psa 18:29 For You light up my lamp. Adonai my God shines in my darkness.

Psa 18:30 For with You I rush on a troop, with my God I scale a wall.

Psa 18:31 As for God, His way is perfect. The word of Adonai is pure. He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

Psa 18:32 For who is God, except Adonai? And who is a Rock, except our God?

Psalm 99:9

Psa 99:9 Exalt Adonai our God, and worship at His holy hill, for holy is Adonai our God.

Isaiah 6:1-7

Isa 6:1 In the year of King Uzziah’s death, I saw Adonai sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the Temple.

Isa 6:2 Seraphim were standing above Him. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3 One called out to another, and said: “Holy, holy, holy, is Adonai-Tzva’ot! The whole earth is full of His glory.”

Isa 6:4 Then the posts of the door trembled at the voice of those who called, and the House was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 Then I said: “Oy to me! For I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I am dwelling among a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, Adonai-Tzva’ot!”

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a glowing coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

Isa 6:7 He touched my mouth with it and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips. Your iniquity is taken away, and your sins atoned for.”

Ezekiel 39:7

Eze 39:7 So I will make My holy Name known among My people Israel. I will not let My holy Name be profaned anymore. The nations will know that I am Adonai, the Holy One in Israel.

Hebrews 1:1-3

Heb 1:1 At many times and in many ways, God spoke long ago to the fathers through the prophets.

Heb 1:2 In these last days He has spoken to us through a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things and through whom He created the universe.

Heb 1:3 This Son is the radiance of His glory and the imprint of His being, upholding all things by His powerful word. When He had made purification for our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Revelation 4:8

Rev 4:8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes all around and within. They do not rest day or night, chanting, “Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh Adonai Elohei-Tzva’ot, asher haya v’hoveh v’yavo! Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts, who was and who is and who is to come!”

Revelation 15:4

Rev 15:4 Who shall not fear and glorify Your name, O Lord? For You alone are Holy. All the nations shall come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed!”