

Parashah Metzora

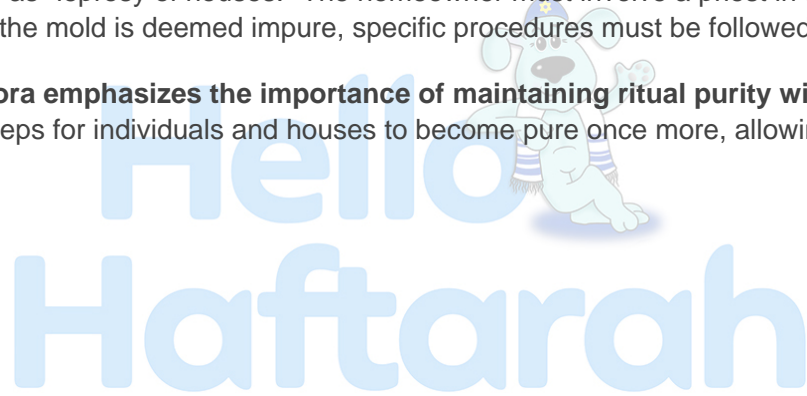
The one that continues the discussion of tzara'at, an affliction often associated with spiritual impurity.

Parashah Metzora is a section from the Torah that deals with matters related to ritual impurity and purification. This parashah is also associated with negative speech or gossip because of its connection to the skin disease known as tzara'at. In the Torah, tzara'at is not just a physical ailment, but also a spiritual issue. It is believed to be a punishment for sins related to speech, including gossip, slander, and other forms of harmful communication.

The focus of the parashah is on the purification process for individuals who have recovered from tzara'at. A priest examines the person to make sure they are recovered, and then performs a series of rituals involving birds, water, and various offerings. This process symbolizes the individual's return to the community after their period of isolation due to their condition.

Additionally, **Parashah Metzora discusses the purification of houses afflicted with a specific type of mold or mildew**, often referred to as "leprosy of houses." The homeowner must involve a priest in the assessment of the house's condition, and if the mold is deemed impure, specific procedures must be followed to cleanse the dwelling.

Overall, **Parashah Metzora emphasizes the importance of maintaining ritual purity within the community** and outlines the necessary steps for individuals and houses to become pure once more, allowing them to reintegrate into society.



Teen Takeaways from Parashah Metzora

1. **Think before you speak:** Just like in Metzora, where negative speech was a big deal, remember that your words have power. Gossip and hurtful comments can harm others and create problems. So, choose your words wisely and be kind.
2. **The Hebrew word metzora can be seen as a combination of the words motzi and ra.** Placing the word shem in the middle produces the Hebrew expression for gossip!
3. **Take responsibility:** When someone had tzara'at, they had to face the consequences and work on getting better. Similarly, when you mess up, it's important to take responsibility for your actions and try to make things right.
4. **Friendship matters:** In the parashah, the community played a big role in helping those with tzara'at. It's a reminder that having good friends and a supportive community can make a big difference in your life.
5. **Leadership matters:** Just as the priests in Metzora provided guidance and leadership, it's important to have mentors and role models in your life. Look up to people who can guide you in the right direction.
6. **Cleanse your mind and body:** In the parashah, cleansing involved both the body and the spirit. Taking care of your physical and mental health is so important. Eat well, exercise, and also practice mindfulness to keep your mind healthy.
7. **Community makes you stronger:** Being part of a community can provide you with strength and support, just like in the parashah. It's great to have friends and mentors who share your values.
8. **Leprosy of houses seems very strange.** The text tells us that "mold" appeared on the walls and spread. Social media has created forums where people can write anything they want. Even where there are rules, their words spread very quickly before their posts are taken down. The walls in the Torah portion that are infected with leprosy are like social media on which young peoples' reputations are dragged through the mud.

Summary

Parashah Metzora teaches us about **being mindful of our words, taking responsibility for our actions, seeking support** from friends and mentors, and **striving to be better individuals**. These lessons can guide teenagers in making positive choices and growing into responsible and compassionate adults.