

## Parashat Tazria and Parashat Metzora Readings: Affliction, Healing, and Cleansing

Lev 15:19 Discharge of blood.

Lev 15:25 Blood flows for many days.

Lev 15:28-30 When the flow stops.

Matt 9:20-22 A woman with a discharge of blood.

Mark 5:24-34

Luke 8:41-48

Why did these women have to be separated and after the flow stopped, atoned for?

Lev 13: 2-17 The tzararat infection (14 days).

Lev 14:1-20 The law of the metzora.

Luke 17:11-19 The healing of the ten men with tzararat.

Mark 1:40-45 Healing the man with tzararat.

Num 12:1-15 Miriam's affliction (7 days).

How did people commonly contract tzararat and how were they healed (the sacrifices were performed after the healing)? Is tzararat sin made visible?

Lev 14:9 Cleansing by water.

**FFOZ Commentary:** <http://ffoz.org/resources/edrash/tazria/baptisma.php>

*Before a cleansed leper could return to a state of levitical purity, he needed to go through a ritual immersion in water. The Hebrew word for a gathering of water suitable for ritual immersion is mikvah (מִקְוָה). Immersion into a mikvah is a standard ritual for most purification ceremonies in the Torah, not just for lepers. In the Greek, immersion into the mikvah was expressed with the Greek term baptisma, from which we derive the word baptism.*

*In some ways, the immersion ritual represents death and resurrection. When a proselyte was converting to Judaism, he had to go through the immersion ritual. The Sages taught that his old, former Gentile-self died in the water and the proselyte emerged reborn as a Jew. Perhaps this is one reason John the Immerser employed immersion as the physical token of repentance. The penitent entering the water of the Jordan was dying to his or her sin and being reborn to a life of repentance and righteousness.*

Mark 1:4-5 John the Immerser.

Mark 1:7-11 John and Yeshua's "immersions".

How is John's mikvah and Yeshua's "mikvah of the spirit" different than the traditional and regularly performed mikvahs Jews unwent as a regular part of life?

Modern observant Jews undergo the mikvah regularly. A Jewish woman will enter the mikvah after the end of each monthly cycle. Why do Christians only "baptize" once and why do some churches perform infant baptisms vs. adult baptisms?