

Question:

In Leviticus 11:31-32, it talks about touching the creeping thing. Does this mean if we kill a spider or hornet (etc.), that we are unclean? Does this apply to us?

Response:

In many ways we are challenged by many aspects of Torah, as it is conveyed and ultimately how it is to be practiced today, absent the Temple. I want to share this excerpt from our Thematic Parsha study for Tazria and Metzora...

Clean and Unclean—There are two Hebrew words used throughout these two parshiot that are variously translated as clean/pure or unclean/contaminated/impure. These English words do not convey the true meaning of the original Hebrew. In fact, there are no English equivalents! Some translations use the word ritually clean or ritually unclean. These two words are closer to the mark.

Unclean—The Hebrew word translated unclean—beginning in Vayikra (**Leviticus**) chapter 11 - is tamei [or tame] (טָמֵא).

Clean—The Hebrew word translated clean is tahor (טָהוֹר).

It is important for you to begin to develop a basic Hebrew vocabulary. Tazria/Metzora is a good place to start learning Hebrew words. In this study we will use tamei (ritually unclean) and tahor (ritually clean) to avoid confusion. You will be given a thematic definition of what it means to be ritually clean or unclean below.

Thus when we are talking about that which is clean and unclean it is based on what Adonai has already determined. We first see a glimpse of Tamei and tahor in B'resheet (Genesis). We first read of Adonai's instruction to gather everything living a pair, both male and female...

Gen 6:19 "From everything living, from each kind of living being, you are to bring two into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they are to be male and female.

Gen 6:20 Of each kind of bird, each kind of livestock, and each kind of animal creeping on the ground, two are to come to you, so that they can be kept alive.

No distinction is made here. Yet, in the next chapter Adonai commands Noach again to gather seven pairs of every clean animal...

Gen 7:1 Adonai said to Noach, "Come into the ark, you and all your household; for I have seen that you alone in this generation are righteous before me.

Gen 7:2 Of every clean animal you are to take seven couples, and of the animals that are not clean, one couple;

Gen 7:3 also of the birds in the air take seven couples—in order to preserve their species throughout the earth.

Thus a distinction is made between tamei (unclean) and tahor (clean), long before Moshe was instructed by Adonai for Moshe to write down every living creature that was either tamei or tahor. Leviticus 11 deals primarily with what Adonai conveys is permissible for food. Yet this chapter does not exclusively refer to that which is food merely but an aspect of that which is unclean and clean and leads into the Parshah that I

had shared with you already, Tazria and Metzora and that which is ritually unclean and clean. Thus there is a theme here.

When we look at Vayikra (Leviticus) 11:31 – 32 further...

Lev 11:31 They are unclean crawling creatures; whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean until evening.

Lev 11:32 Anything on which one of them falls when dead will become unclean—wooden utensil, article of clothing, leather, sacking—any utensil used for work; it must be put in water, and it will be unclean until evening; then it will be clean.

The focus of this chapter is not only on our consumption, but also our interaction. Notice that these verses talk about, an unclean creature that is already dead. This has nothing to do with making contact with them while they are alive. These verses focus specifically on one aspect, yet is in line with other passages as it relates to coming in contact with that which was once alive and is now dead.

Lev 22:3 Tell them, 'Any descendant of yours through all your generations who approaches the holy things that the people of Isra'el consecrate to Adonai and is unclean will be cut off from before me; I am Adonai.

Lev 22:4 " 'Any descendant of Aharon with tzara`at or a discharge is not to eat the holy things until he is clean. Anyone who has touched a person made unclean by a dead body, or who has had a seminal emission,

Lev 22:5 or who has touched a reptile or insect that can make him unclean, or a man who is unclean for any reason and who can transmit to him his uncleanness—

Lev 22:6 the person who touches any of these will be unclean until evening and is not to eat the holy things unless he bathes his body in water.

Lev 22:7 After sunset he will be clean; and afterwards, he may eat the holy things; because they are his food.

When you are unclean it means you become "ritually unclean" and thus are not permitted to doing things such as bringing your sacrifice to the Mishkan or Temple. We have seen when someone comes in contact with anything that is dead, meaning it once was living and blood was flowing through it is now considered to be unclean.

I would say, if you kill something that you have come in contact with directly you would be considered unclean until evening. Yet consider the aspect of what it meant to be unclean, you would be cut off from the holy things, specifically the Mishkan or Temple.

Yet the consumption of unclean animals as food provides another distinction as well. Not only would you be separated from the holy things, but Adonai provides His reason for eating that which are only clean animals because Adonai concludes this chapter in the following manner...

Lev 11:44 For I am Adonai your God; therefore, consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am holy; and do not defile yourselves with any kind of swarming creature that moves along the ground.

Lev 11:45 For I am Adonai, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. Therefore you are to be holy, because I am holy.

Lev 11:46 " 'Such, then, is the law concerning animals, flying creatures, all living creatures that move about in the water, and all creatures that swarm on the ground.

Lev 11:47 Its purpose is to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.'

Question:

How do we reconcile David's prayers in Psalms for revenge against his enemies with what Yeshua tells us to do, that we should pray for them and do good to them?

Response:

When we look at some of David's Psalms and in essence his prayers to Adonai what do we see? When we look at Psalm 35...

Psa 35:1 [*By David:*] Adonai, oppose those who oppose me; fight against those who fight against me.

Psa 35:2 Grasp your shield and protective gear, and rise to my defense.

Psa 35:3 Brandish spear and battle-axe against my pursuers; let me hear you say, "I am your salvation."

Psa 35:4 May those who seek my life be disgraced and put to confusion; may those who are plotting harm for me be repulsed and put to shame.

Psa 35:5 May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of Adonai to drive them on.

Psa 35:6 May their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of Adonai to pursue them.

Psa 35:7 For unprovoked, they hid their net over a pit; unprovoked, they dug it for me.

Psa 35:8 May destruction come over him unawares. May the net he concealed catch himself; may he fall into it and be destroyed.

We read of David's impassioned prayer for protection and that no harm come to him, while God protects him from his enemies.

When we look at such a passage as this in relation to Yeshua's Words in Matthew 5...

Mat 5:43 "You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Love your neighbor—and hate your enemy.'

Mat 5:44 But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

In one sense we must look at David in a separate way, not absent of context, yet in context.

David has been anointed King of Israel while Adonai has rejected Sha'ul. Yet there was to be no harm towards Sha'ul because he was still anointed King.

1Sa 26:9 But David said to Avishai, "Don't destroy him! Nobody can raise his hand against Adonai's anointed without becoming guilty!"

1Sa 26:10 David then added, "As Adonai lives, Adonai will strike him down, or the day will come for him to die, or he will go down to battle and be swept away.

1Sa 26:11 Adonai forbid that I should raise my hand against Adonai's anointed! But now, we'll take the spear by his head and the jug of water, and get out of here."

If the same is true for Sha'ul, then the same would be true for David. The enemies of David came against the anointed of Adonai. Thus David's prayers to Adonai were directed towards those who were against him. If they were against David, then they were against Adonai.

Deu 32:35 Vengeance and payback are mine for the time when their foot slips; for the day of their calamity

is coming soon, their doom is rushing upon them.'

Deu 32:36 "Yes, Adonai will judge his people, taking pity on his servants, when he sees that their strength is gone, that no one is left, slave or free.

Thus, do we pray like David against our enemies?

The circumstances and thus the context of David's prayer are different than what we experience.

Mat 5:43 "You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Love your neighbor—and hate your enemy.'

Mat 5:44 But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

Mat 5:45 Then you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun shine on good and bad people alike, and he sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous alike.

*Some contrast the "realistic" ethics of Judaism with "Christian romanticism" and cite this as an example. However, the command is not to have good feelings about your enemies, but to want and do good for them, and, more specifically, to **pray for those who persecute you**. It is realistic enough to have been flattered by imitation in a well-known medieval Jewish work: "Pray for your enemy that he serve God." (Orchot Tzaddikim 15c) – Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern*

Our purpose is to expand the Kingdom of Adonai and thus our enemies are potential residents of the Kingdom. We should pray to see them through Adonai's eyes. Though they may rebel or reject the message of Messiah, so long as they have breath, we have opportunity in continuing to be His witnesses...

Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

Mat 28:18 Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Mat 28:19 Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age."

Question:

How do we love our family & friends when they are obviously choosing things contrary to the Word of God?

We are all sinners and Yeshua came for the lost but the Word of God is clear not to associate with "evil doers" 1 Cor 5:11 for one. We are seen as "haters" & "intolerant". How do we do this?

Response:

This question further builds upon the previous question.

Our family is probably one of our greatest challenges as believers. We are so close to them as they are to us, and when there is

Mat 10:21 "A brother will betray his brother to death, and a father his child; children will turn against their parents and have them put to death.

Mat 10:22 Everyone will hate you because of me, but whoever holds out till the end will be preserved from

harm.

Yet we are to continue to persevere in this world and be a light in this world, emitting the light of Messiah. 1 Corinthians 5:11 was referenced, yet I want to share a few additional verses, providing further context.

1Co 5:9 In my earlier letter I wrote you not to associate with people who engage in sexual immorality.

1Co 5:10 I didn't mean the sexually immoral people outside your community, or the greedy, or the thieves or the idol-worshippers—for then you would have to leave the world altogether!

1Co 5:11 No, what I wrote you was not to associate with anyone who is supposedly a brother but who also engages in sexual immorality, is greedy, worships idols, is abusive, gets drunk or steals. With such a person you shouldn't even eat!

1Co 5:12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Isn't it those who are part of the community that you should be judging?

1Co 5:13 God will judge those who are outside. Just expel the evildoer from among yourselves.

Thus, Sha'ul is clarifying who you are not to relate with. Those inside the community who profess to be "brothers". Those who do profess that they believe in Yeshua. Those who do profess to believe in and thus embrace His teachings are held to a higher standard, The Word of God, that is the Teachings of Yeshua.

Yet, I will add this as well...If we are to reflect Yeshua's light and thus we are to be a light to the world then that ultimately means we are only "preaching to the choir" Consider Yeshua's interaction with the woman from Kena'an...

Mat 15:21 Yeshua left that place and went off to the region of Tzor and Tzidon.

Mat 15:22 A woman from Kena'an who was living there came to him, pleading, "Sir, have pity on me. Son of David! My daughter is cruelly held under the power of demons!"

Mat 15:23 But Yeshua did not say a word to her. Then his talmidim came to him and urged him, "Send her away, because she is following us and keeps pestering us with her crying."

Mat 15:24 He said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Isra'el."

Mat 15:25 But she came, fell at his feet and said, "Sir, help me!"

Mat 15:26 He answered, "It is not right to take the children's food and toss it to their pet dogs."

Mat 15:27 She said, "That is true, sir, but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their master's table."

Mat 15:28 Then Yeshua answered her, "Lady, you are a person of great trust. Let your desire be granted." And her daughter was healed at that very moment.

Are we not to be like Messiah? Consider the following...

Luk 19:5 When he came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zakkai! Hurry! Come down, because I have to stay at your house today!"

Luk 19:6 He climbed down as fast as he could and welcomed Yeshua joyfully.

Luk 19:7 Everyone who saw it began muttering, "He has gone to be the house-guest of a sinner."

Luk 19:8 But Zakkai stood there and said to the Lord, "Here, Lord, I am giving half of all I own to the poor; and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay him back four times as much."

Luk 19:9 Yeshua said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, inasmuch as this man too is a son of Avraham.

Luk 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost."

I would reiterate the answer from the previous question as it relates to Yeshua's words in Matthew 5:44...

Mat 5:43 "You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Love your neighbor—and hate your enemy.'

Mat 5:44 But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

Mat 5:45 Then you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun shine on good and bad people alike, and he sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous alike.

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Question:

There is a Messianic Seal symbol - a menorah atop a fish creating the star of David in the middle.

There are some claims saying it was the symbol used by the first century church in Jerusalem.

Is this an accepted symbol? Or best to stay away from symbols?

Response:

I do not know the history nor its origin, though will convey this about any symbol as it relates to Scripture.

Personally, I have never been enamoured by this symbol and thus really have no opinion towards it.

Exo 20:3 כ "You are to have no other gods before me.

Exo 20:4 You are not to make for yourselves a carved image or any kind of representation of anything in heaven above, on the earth beneath or in the water below the shoreline.

Exo 20:5 You are not to bow down to them or serve them; for I, Adonai your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

Deu 4:15 "Therefore, watch out for yourselves! Since you did not see a shape of any kind on the day Adonai spoke to you in Horev from the fire,

Deu 4:16 do not become corrupt and make yourselves a carved image having the shape of any figure—not a representation of a human being, male or female,

Deu 4:17 or a representation of any animal on earth, or a representation of any bird that flies in the air,

Deu 4:18 or a representation of anything that creeps along on the ground, or a representation of any fish in the water below the shoreline.

Deu 4:19 For the same reason, do not look up at the sky, at the sun, moon, stars and everything in the sky, and be drawn away to worship and serve them; Adonai your God has allotted these to all the peoples under the entire sky.