

PARSHAT TAZRIA-METZORA
LEVITICUS 12:1-15:38
HAFTARAH II KINGS 7:3-20
3 IYYAR 5785/1 MAY 2025



PH-118

Oil on canvass by Clyfford Still

LIFE AND DEATH MERGING

1. When a woman תִּזְרִיעַ and bears a male, she shall be *tamei* seven days...she shall not touch any consecrated thing nor enter the sanctuary until her period of purification is completed. (Leviticus 12:2-4)

זָרַע – to sow, scatter seed; produce seed;

“The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants (מִזְרִיעַ זָרַע) of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it (זָרַעוֹ-בָּו). And God saw that this was good. (Genesis 1:12)

2. Overlay it [i.e., the ark] with *zahav tahor* (pure gold)... (Exodus 25:11)

3. According to [Mary] Douglas, Leviticus designates as sources of impurity not things that are *morally* sullied but things that by their very nature are unbounded and cannot be hemmed in....Leviticus prohibits in order to protect. The new mother is barred from entry to the Temple because the boundary-breaking experience of childbirth cannot translate neatly into a covenantal Temple framework...Childbirth is a process in which pleasure and pain, life and death, purity and impurity, are intermingled and become inextricable from each other. (Sarah Rindner, *Mosaic Magazine* 04/27/2017)
4. "It's intolerable to be stopped by a frame's edge." (Clifford Still)
5. "These are not paintings in the usual sense; they are life and death merging in fearful union. As for me, they kindle a fire; through them I breathe again, hold a golden cord, find my own revelation." (Clifford Still)
6. "I never wanted color to be color. I never wanted texture to be texture, or images to become shapes. I wanted them all to fuse into a living spirit." (Clifford Still)