

טהור

hebrew

Meaning

- Clean
- Pure

Adjective.

The word טהור (from the root טהר) can be used to describe physical, ceremonial or moral purity, depending on the context. It is contrasted with the word טמא which means unclean or impure.

Ceremonial and Ritual Purity

In Leviticus and Numbers, טהור primarily refers to ritual cleanness - the state required to approach God or participate in worship. Examples include:

- [Leviticus 10:10](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 10:10

Hebrew וְלִהְיוּ בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֵל וּבֵין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר ESV You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, NIV You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, NLT ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τῶν βεβήλων καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ἀκαθάρτων καὶ τῶν καθαρῶν... - Priests are to distinguish between the holy and the profane, the clean and the unclean

- [Leviticus 11](#) - Animals fit for consumption are called “clean”; others are “unclean”
- Leviticus 13-15 - A person healed from leprosy or bodily discharge is declared clean after ritual purification
- [Numbers 19:19](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigNumbers 19:19

Hebrew וְהָיָה הַטָּהוֹר עַל הַטָּמֵא בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְחִטָּאוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְכִבֹּס בְּגָדָיו וְרָחַץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָהַר ESV And the clean person shall sprinkle it on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day. Thus on the seventh day he shall cleanse him, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and at evening he shall be clean. καὶ οὐ καθαρὸς ἐπὶ τὸν ἀκάθαρτον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ... - The ashes of the red heifer are used to cleanse a person who has become unclean through contact with a corpse

In ritual law, “clean” denotes a state of acceptability before God, achieved through obedience and purification rites.

Moral and Ethical Purity

Beyond ritual contexts, “clean” also refers to moral integrity and inner purity — especially in the Psalms and Proverbs. For example:

- [Psalm 12:6](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 12:6

Hebrew מִשְׁדָּב עֲנִיִּים מֵאֲנָקָת אֲבִיּוֹנִים עֲתָה אֲקוּם יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אֲשֶׁרֶת בְּיִשְׁע יִפְתָּח לִי ESV The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. NIV And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. τὰ λόγια κυρίου λόγια ἀγνάργυριον πεπυρωμένον δοκίμιον τῆ γῆ καθαρισμένον... (verse 7plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigאֲמָרוֹת יְהוָה אֲמָרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת כִּסְף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לֶאֱרָץ in Hebrew) – “The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined seven times.”

- [Psalm 24:4](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 24:4

Hebrew לֹא יָבֵב אֶשְׁרָ לֹא נָשָׂא לִשְׁוֹא נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה ESV He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. NIV He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. χερσὶν καὶ καθαρὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ ὁ οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπιματαίωτὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐπὶ δόλω τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ... – The one who may ascend God's hill is “he who has clean hands and a pure heart.”

- [Proverbs 15:26](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigProverbs 15:6

Hebrew בֵּית צַדִּיק חֵסֶן רַב וּבֵית בּוֹאֵת רָשָׁע נַעֲכָרַת ESV In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked. NIV The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings them trouble. ἐν πλεοναζούσῃ δικαιοσύνῃ ἰσχύς πολλή οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐκ γῆς οἰκοῖς δικαίων ἰσχύς πολλή καρποὶ δὲ ἀσεβῶν... – “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are clean.”

Here, “clean” reflects a moral and spiritual quality — sincerity, truthfulness, and holiness that aligns with God's nature.

Physical Purity or Cleanness

Sometimes “clean” has a straightforward physical sense, describing clear or unpolluted substances:

- [Exodus 27:20](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 27:20

Hebrew וְאָתָּה תְצַוֶּנָּה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁמֶן זַיִת זָךְ כְּתִית לַמָּאֹר לְהַעֲלֹת נֵר תָּמִיד ESV “You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. NIV “Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning. καὶ οὐ σύνταξον τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ λαβέτωσαν σοῦ ξλαίου ἐξ ἐλαίων καθαρὸν κεκομμένον... – “Pure olive oil” for the lamp

- [Leviticus 24:4](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 24:4

Hebrew עַל הַמִּנְחָה הַזֹּהֶה יַעֲרֹךְ אֶת הַנִּרְוֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד ESV He shall arrange the lamps on the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD regularly. NIV The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD must be tended continually. NLT Aaron and the priests must tend the lamps on the pure gold lampstand continually in the LORD's presence. ἐπὶ τῆς λυχνίας τῆς καθαρᾶς καύσετε τοὺς λύχνους ἕναντικυρίου ἕως τὸ πρῶν... – “Pure gold” used in

the tabernacle

- [Ezekiel 22:24](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigEzekiel 22:24

Hebrew לֹא גֶשֶׁמַּח וְלֹא מְטֶהְרָה הִיא אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן ESV “Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed or rained upon in the day of indignation. NIV “Son of man, say to the land, ‘You are a land that has had no rain or showers in the day of wrath.’

οὐκ ἔστιν ὕδωρ καθαρόν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆνιν οὐ βρέχεται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς... – “Rain that is clean (or unmixed)”

In these cases, the emphasis is absence of contamination - the literal sense underlying its ritual and moral uses.

Spiritual or Symbolic Purity

Prophets and poets often use “clean” symbolically for spiritual renewal:

- [Psalm 51:10](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 51:10

Hebrew תְּשִׁימֵנִי שִׁשְׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה תִּגְלִלָּה עֲצָמוֹת דָּבָר ESV Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. NIV Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. NLT Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.

καρδίαν καθαράν κτίσον ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ θεός καὶ πνεῦμα ἐγκάινισον ἐν τοῖς μου... (verse [12](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigבְּקִרְבִּי יְהוָה יִבְרָא לִי אֱלֹהִים יְרוּחַ כָּכֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי in Hebrew) – “Create in me a clean heart, O God,” linking purity with inner transformation

- [Ezekiel 36:25](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigEzekiel 36:25

Hebrew וְזָרַקְתִּי עָלֶיכֶם מִיַּם טְהוֹרִים וְטָהַרְתֶּם מִכָּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם אֶטְהַר אֶתְכֶם ESV I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. NIV I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

καὶ ἐφύψω ὑμῶς ὕδωρ καθαρόν καὶ καθαρίσθησθε ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν ἀκαθαρσιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν εἰδωλῶν ὑμῶν... – God promises, “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean,” a metaphor for forgiveness and spiritual renewal

This later prophetic use anticipates New Covenant imagery, where external purification points to inner cleansing by God's Spirit.

New Testament Connection

The Greek καθαρός, used in the Septuagint to translate טהור, carries these same meanings. Take for example, Jesus' teaching in [Matthew 5:8](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigMatthew 5:8

Greek μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται. ESV “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. NIV Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. NLT God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. KJV Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God., “Blessed are the pure in heart,” which directly echoes [Psalm 24:4](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 24:4

Hebrew **נָקִי כַּיָּדָיו וְכִי לֹא יָשָׂא לִשְׂוֵא נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה** ESV He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. NIV He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. **χερσὶνκαὶκαθαρὸςτῆκαρδίᾱδουκῆλαβενἐπιματαῖωτὴνψυχὴναὐτοῦκαὶοὐκἐπιδόλωτῶπλησίοναὐτοῦ...** and **Psalm 51:10**plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 51:10

Hebrew **וַיִּשְׂמַחַהּ תְּלַלְנָהּ עֲצָמוֹת דָּכִית** ESV Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. NIV Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. NLT Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. **καρδίανκαθαράνκτίσονἐνἐμοίᾧθέόςκαὶπνεῦμαἐγκαίνισονἐντοῖςμου....**

Thus, **טָהוֹר** develops from ritual cleanness to moral integrity, and ultimately to inner holiness through God's transformatative action, a concept central to both Old and New Testament theology.

Lexical Table

Form	Part of Speech	Meaning / Sense	Typical Contexts	Hebrew
Adjective	Describes a state of cleanness or purity	Ceremonial, moral, or physical cleanness	Leviticus 11:47 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 11:47 Hebrew לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר ESV to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten. NIV You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.' ἀνάμεινοντὸἀκαθάρτουκαὶἀνάμεινοντὸκαθαρὸςκαὶἀνάμεινοντὸζῶν...; Psalms 12:6 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 12:6 Hebrew מִשְׁדְּ עֲנִיִים מֵאֲנָקֶת אֲבוֹנִים עֲתָה אֲקוּם יֵאמֹר יְהוָה אֲשִׁית בְּזֹשֶׁעַ יִפְחֶן לוֹ NIV The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. NIV And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. τὰλόγιακυροῦλοῦγιαἀγνάργυρίουπεπυρωμέναδοκιμὸντῆγῆκακαθαρισμένων...; Psalm 51:10 (verse 12 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 51:10) in Hebrew	טָהוֹר
			Leviticus 13:37 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 13:37 Hebrew וְאִם בְּעֵינָיו עֹד הַתִּזְתָּ וְשֹׁעַר שְׁתָּר צִמּוֹ בִּן נֶרְפָא הִנֵּתָ טָהוֹר וְהָיָה טָהוֹר וְהָיָה טָהוֹר NIV But if in his eyes the itch is unchanged and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed and he is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean. NIV If, however, in his judgment it is unchanged and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean. ἐὰνδὲἐνώπιονμείνητὸἐπιχώραςκαὶθριξμέλαιναε...; Numbers 8:7 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigNumbers 8:7 Hebrew וְהָיָה תַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם הַיָּה עֲלֵיהֶם מִי חֲמַת וְהִקְבִּירוּ תַעַר עַל כָּל בְּשָׂרָם וּבְגִדֵיהֶם וְהִסְתִּירוּ NIV Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of purification upon them, and let them go with a razor over all their body, and wash their clothes and cleanse themselves. NIV καὶποιοῦσεῖςαὐτοῖςτὸνάγνισμὸνάτῶναὐτοῦτῶνδράγνισμοῦκαὶἐπελεύσεταιἐπὶπάντοσῶμααὐτῶνκαὶπλυνουσιντὰμάτιααὐτῶνκαὶκαθαροῖέσονται...	
Verb (Piel)	To cleanse, purify	Active causation of cleanness—used for priests, rituals, or God cleansing	Leviticus 14:7 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 14:7 Hebrew וְהָיָה עַל הַמִּסְתָּר מִן הַצִּדְעִים שֶׁבַע פְּעֻמִּים וְהָיָה אֵת הַצֶּפֶר הַחִיָּה עַל פְּנֵי הַשִּׁדָּה NIV And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean and shall let the living bird go into the open field. NIV Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fi...; Psalm 51:2 (verse 4 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 51:2) in Hebrew; Ezekiel 36:25 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigEzekiel 36:25 Hebrew וְרִקַּקְתִּי עָלֶיךָ מֵי טָהוֹרִים וְטָהַרְתָּ מִכָּל טִמְאוֹתֶיךָ וּמִכָּל גִּילּוּכֶיךָ אֲטַהֵר אֶתְּךָ NIV I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. NIV I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. καὶἐφύσῃςτῶνκαθάρωνκαὶκαθαρίσειςσεσθεῖςἀπὸπασῶντῶνἀκαθαρσιῶνσύμκαὶἀπὸπάντωντῶννειδῶλῶνσύμ...	טָהַר
			Leviticus 13:6 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 13:6 Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV And the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day, and if the diseased area has faded and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only an eruption. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. καὶὀψεταιαὐτὸνδὸλερεὺςτῆγῆμἐρατῆῆβδό...; Leviticus 13:17 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLeviticus 13:17 Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV And the priest shall examine him, and if the disease has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce the diseased person clean; he is clean. NIV The priest is to examine him, and if the sores have turned white, the priest shall pronounce the infected person clean; then he will be clean. καὶὀψεταιοἰερεὺςκαὶἰδοὺμετῆβαλενῆἀφῆεῖςτὸλεῦκὸνκαὶκαθαρίεῖοἰερεὺςτῆνἀφῆ... Numbers 19:9 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigNumbers 19:9	
Noun (feminine)	Purity, cleanness	The state or quality of being clean	Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place. And they shall be kept for the water for impurity for the congregation of the people of Israel; it is a sin offering. καὶσυνάξειἄνθρωποςκαθαρὸςτὴνσποδὸντῆςδαμάλωςκαὶἀποθήσειἐξω...; 2 Chronicles 30:19 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big2 Chronicles 30:19 Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV who sets his heart on seeking God-the LORD, the God of his fathers-even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary. πάσῃκαρδίᾱκατευσουσὴςἐκτῆθησακύριοντὸνθεὸντὸνπατέραῶναὐτῶνκαὶοὐκατὰτῆνῆγνεῖαντὸνἄγιον... 1 Chronicles 23:28 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big1 Chronicles 23:28	טָהָרָה
			Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV For their duty was to assist the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, having the care of the courts and the chambers, the cleansing of all that is holy, and any work for the service of the house of God. ὁτιἐστῆσαναὐτοὶεἰςτῆἐργασίαντοῦλαῶςκαὶἐντοῖςκυρίουἐπὶτὰςαὐλάςκαὶἐπὶτ... Ezekiel 24:13 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigEzekiel 24:13	
Noun (feminine, plural)	Purifications, rites of cleansing	Refers to purification ceremonies or objects	Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV On account of your unclean lewdness, because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your uncleanness, you shall not be cleansed anymore till I have satisfied my fury upon you. ἀνθὺνἐμαίνουσακαὶτὴλέανμηκαθαρίσθῆςἐτιδέωζοῦτὸνθυμὸνμου...	טָהָרוֹת
Noun (masculine)	Cleansing, purification	The process or means of purification	Hebrew וְהָיָה אִם הָיָה הַנֶּגַע עוֹד וְלֹא פָּקַד הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הָיָא וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר NIV On account of your unclean lewdness, because I would have cleansed you and you were not cleansed from your uncleanness, you shall not be cleansed anymore till I have satisfied my fury upon you. ἀνθὺνἐμαίνουσακαὶτὴλέανμηκαθαρίσθῆςἐτιδέωζοῦτὸνθυμὸνμου...	טָהוֹר

Noun (feminine)	Place or means of cleansing	Instrument or site of purification	Isaiah 4:4plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigIsaiah 4:4 Hebrew מִשְׁפָּט וּבִרְחוֹם בָּעֵר יְהוָה מִקְרָבָהּ בְּרוּחַ דְּמִי יִרְשָׁלַם ESV when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. NIV The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. ...	מִסְחָה
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Last update: **2025/10/20 01:21**

