

Parashat Tazria

By: Aaron Ayach and Isaac Gateno (Class of 2020)

Summary:

- . starts off with the specific laws of bris milah, and how the mother is unclean before, but pure 33 days following
- . if a girl is born the mother is unclean for 2 weeks, then pure for the subsequent 66 days
- . laws of tzara'at: if someone has an unknown skin ailment they should get it checked by the cohanim
- . if they are determined to be a leper, they must shave and tear their clothes and exile themselves etc.
- . clothes should be burned or cleaned in a special process

Classical Commentary: Rashi, France, 1040-1105

הפך לבן – מתחילה שחור והפך לבן בתוך הנגע. ומיעוט שיער שנים.

THE HAIR ...] IS TURNED WHITE — This means that at first it was dark, and it turned white is two (Sifra, Tazria שער within the plague. The smallest number of hairs implied by the term .(Parashat Nega'im, Chapter 2 2

As I was reading through the parasha I encountered the pasuk regarding the Cohen examining the body and the implications depending on whether it has turned white or has become deeper. I asked myself, what constitutes it becoming leprosy with the color change? How does one differentiate between the growing of white hairs between leprosy? Rashi, thankfully, addresses this question by saying that to know that the white hairs are a result of the plague, they first need to be dark before the plague then become white- he also states that even 2 white hairs can qualify to be considered as a result of the plague.

Parshah Playlist:

1. Led Zeppelin - Immigrant Song

This song has a repetitive motif of screaming. This screaming is the first thing that came to my mind when I pictured the searing pain of circumcision before safer procedures were set in place. It also reminds me of how earlier Jews like Avraham had to undergo the painful procedure at a ripe old age. The procedure is surely painful enough to elicit a cry or two.

2. Death - Leprosy

I'm going to be perfectly honest here, I have no idea what on earth they're saying in this song, for it is of the blackest of black metal songs. Nonetheless, the opportunity presented before me,

upon looking up “Leprosy” on Spotify, was too good to pass up on. Just like this song is absolutely terrible and raspy and, and frankly impossible to listen to, the lepers plagued by the awful disease were viewed as pariahs amongst their brethren for their mangled skin and disfigured appearance. So in that manner, it isn’t just the title which befits the parsha, but the content as well.

3. **Bruno Mars - Locked Out of Heaven** (might be like one bad word, my bad)

In the song Locked Out of Heaven, Bruno sings about a girl who his inability to be with is like being “locked out of heaven.” The chorus of the song can also be viewed from the perspective of the Lepers who feel not only exiled from their physical camp by their disfigurement, but possibly a deeper sense of exile from G-d’s kingdom for their inability to partake in G-d’s miracles with their brothers.

4. **Ellie Goulding - Burn**

In the song Burn, Ellie Goulding sings about burning in a positive way. The idea of burning for a positive connotation seems to counter the laws regarding burning the disgraced clothes of the Lepers. In reality, the burning of these shameful objects is one of the many ways we seek to cleanse the Leper of their misdeeds and to rehabilitate them into a new and cleaner life. By burning the clothes of the Leper we’re not only destroying the unclean, but helping to liberate him from the errs of his ways.

Art:

PIECE #1



Yoraam Raanan

My first piece of art is made by the amazing artist, Yoraam Ranaan. This piece of art is in fact based on a pasuk from the parasha, namely:

וּבְמִלָּאתָּהּ יָמֵי טְהוֹרָתָהּ לִבְנוֹ אוֹ לַבֵּת תָּבִיא כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה וּבֶן־יוֹנָה אוֹ־תֹר לְחֹטֶאת אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן:

Meaning “when the days of her purification have been completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a sheep in its first year as a burnt offering, and a young dove or a turtle dove as a sin offering, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the kohen”

The woman, painted in blue, reflects the sky, signifying the purification of her body after birth. In contrast the priest is painted red, reminiscent of earth and blood, and the materialism of the world.

PIECE #2



This piece of art is made by Ahuva Klein and is titled “The Brit Milah- circumcision”. Ahuva Klein is an artist and teacher living in Israel. This painting is very realistic, depicting the process described in the parasha, the circumcision. This portrait is inspired by the first 3 pasukim of the parasha. We picked this because we felt it was important to have a painting that exceptionally represented one of the Jewish peoples big traditions, as it is talked about in the parasha.