



Lev. 13: 1And HaShem spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying: 2 When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, or a scab, or a bright spot, and it become in the skin of his flesh the plague of leprosy, then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests

*(Read the whole chapter to see how diligently they examined any suspicious growth on person or cloth)*

44 he is a leprous man, he is unclean; the priest shall surely pronounce him unclean: his plague is in his head. 45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry: 'Unclean, unclean.' 46 All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be.

<b>c.</b> <b>1250</b>	<b>Moses, the Exodus wilderness</b>	<b>nomadic tribal migration</b>	<b>* China: Shang dynasty (c. 1480-1050)</b>
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In Scripture the term tzoraat (leprosy) denotes an affliction of the skin which renders the person unclean; the word is also applied to a blemish on the surface of an object which makes it unfit for ritual or sacred use. Signs of leprosy are listed in Lev. 13. A person declared leprous by a PRIEST is quarantined. When cured, the leper must undergo a service of cleansing and bring offerings to the TEMPLE. According to the RABBIS, the disease results from scandalmongering and evil talk. The laws regarding leprosy are found in the TRACTATE Negaim in the TALMUD.

**105 (c) RITUAL FOR LEPROSY.** The Hebrew word translated as "leprosy," does not refer to Hansen's disease, which is what we normally mean by leprosy. The biblical disease was noticeably less serious, it was curable and its symptoms were those of a number of relatively superficial skin diseases (Lev 13:1-44). A disease, when so diagnosed by a priest, rendered people ritually unclean. They then had to move to safe distance from town until cured (2 Kgs 7:3). It was for the priest to determine that the cure had taken place (Lev. 14:3) and to perform the rite of purification.

**106** This rite is described in Lev 14, which is apparently a fusion of two rituals, one primitive and other more recent. In the primitive rite a vessel was filled with "living" water and over this a bird was slaughtered, so that its blood ran into the water. A live bird was then plunged into the water, and cedarwood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop were added. Finally, the bird was allowed to fly away. Lepers were sprinkled with this water, declared pure; but it was not until seven days later, after having shaved their whole body, washed their clothing and bathed that they were definitively clean (Lev 14:1.) This rite contained vestiges of very ancient superstition. Unsightly skin diseases were considered to be caused by a devil, who must be expelled. As in the case of the heifer, the reddened water was used for its apotropaic qualities; and the escaping bird symbolized the fleeing demon. In the more recent ritual (Lev 14:10-32) the person offered a sacrifice for reparation, a sin offering and a holocaust. With blood from the first sacrifice. The priest daubed the subject's right ear, right thumb, right big toe; he then anointed the same members with oil and poured oil on the former leper's head. This anointing is paralleled in the Mesopotamian and Canaanite ceremony accompanying the freeing of a slave.

Brown, Fitzmyer & Murphy. [The Jerome Biblical Commentary](#). Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice Hall. 1990. Pg. 1274.