



In last week's *parasha* we learned that the individual suffering from biblical leprosy is removed and separated from the community. But now we see that this can change around entirely when he is healed. That is to say, when the individual recognizes that his behavior was anti-social and he repents, then the kohen can see that he has made a spiritual recovery from his original condition.

As part of his rehabilitation the individual must then perform three actions, each of which is reminiscent of others greater than him –

1. Jewish repentance on Yom Kippur is brought about by means of two goats, one of which is sacrificed and the other which is sent off to the desert. Here, too we find that the leper brings two birds, one which is sacrificed and the other which is set free. This effects repentance and the leper can now enter the Israelite camp.

2. The leper removed all of his bodily hair. The only other time this is found is when the Levites were prepared for their service in the Temple. This allows the leper to enter the camp of the Levites.

3. Just as the kohanim were prepared for Temple service by means of sacrificial blood smeared on ears, thumbs and toes, we find similar smearing of oil and sacrificial blood. This purifies the leper, allowing him to reach the level of the priests and enter into the Priest camp.

The Sages teach that penitents are greater than the righteous, and we see that concept expressed in these laws.