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The Needy Leper
14: 21-32

The needy leper DIG: What special provisions were made for the poor? What does all this say about God's concern for the "sick?" Or the "well?" Who was Yeshua more concerned about? The "sick" or the "healthy?" Those "sinners" who know they need the Physician, or those "righteous" who deny it? When were these mitzvot carried out? Why do they delay?

REFLECT: How is leprosy a good metaphor for the unredeemed, mortal condition? How are we ever dying? How are the unredeemed are marked by sin and yet continue to generate sin. Like the leper, how are the unredeemed barred from the presence of ADONAI? They cannot enter the assembly. How were you changed when you were redeemed and anointed?

Beginning with the previous Torah portion and continuing with this one, we have been examining the concepts of being ritually clean and ritually unclean in terms of what they can teach us about two kingdoms: the kingdom of sin and death (**to see link click Bv – The Test of Tsara'at**), and **the Kingdom of Life and Righteousness** (see **Cg – The Test of M'tsora**).

Leprosy was a costly affair. If a person had suffered the exile of **leprosy** for any length of time, he was probably without means to purchase sacrifices. The Torah makes an allowance for **the leper** who cannot afford all the necessary sacrifices by allowing **him** to substitute bird offerings for **the purification offering** (**to see link click Al – The Purification Offering: Purified by the Blood**) and **burnt offering** (see **Ai – The Burnt Offering: Acceptance by God**). The same allowance is made for a woman bringing **her purification after childbirth** (see **Bt – Women After Childbirth**). It could be that our **leper** from Galilee chose this latter option. Nevertheless, the Torah still requires **the lamb** for **the guilt offering** (see **Am – The Guilt Offering: Evidence of Repentance**) and **two-thirds of a pint of olive oil. He** cannot skimp on **his purification**. Because **the leper** chose to use **birds** instead of **lambs**, **he** is allowed to reduce the amount of three tenths of an ephah – one tenth ephah for each animal.[247]

If he is poor, so that he can't afford to do otherwise, he is to take one male lamb as a guilt offering to be waved, to make atonement for him; two quarts of fine flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering; two-thirds of a pint of olive oil; and two doves or two young pigeons, such as he can afford, the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. On the eighth day, he will bring them to the priest for his purification, to the entrance of the tent of meeting before ADONAI. The priest is to take the lamb of the guilt offering and the two-thirds of a pint of olive oil and wave them as a wave offering before YHVH (14:21-24).

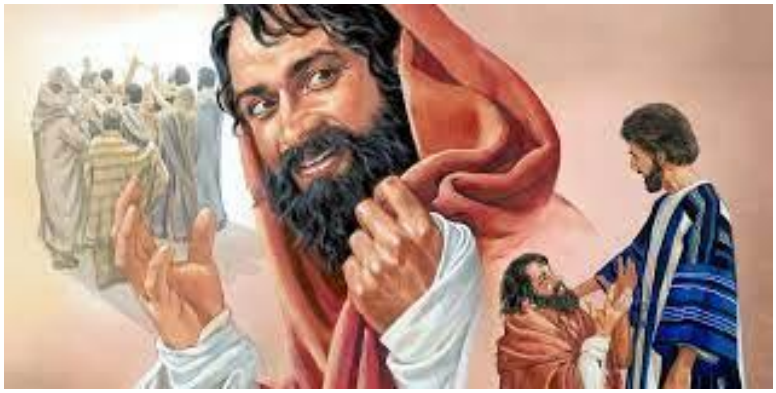
The priest, however, carried out the same procedure as **he** did for the person of adequate economic means (see **Ci – The Concluding Purification Ceremony**). The same results of cleansing and atonement were achieved. The procedures in **14:25-31** are virtually identical to the regulations of **14:10-18**, apart from the **two doves or two young pigeons** being substituted for **two lambs** and the reduction of the amount of **six and-a-half quarts of fine flour to two quarts of fine flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering.**[248]

Concessions to **the poor** can also be seen earlier in **Leviticus 1** with the sacrifice of **a burnt offering.** The rich man had to give more than **the poor** man. What **he** brought to **sacrifice** was determined by **his** economic status, and a progression of the most valuable to the least valuable, **from the herd**, to **the flock**, to **the bird**, is seen. Like **Abel's sacrifice (Genesis 4:4)**, **YHVH looked with favor on the Israelite** who brought **a burnt offering**. **God** received **the bird offering** from **the poor** with the same appreciation as **He** received **the bull** from the affluent man, **an aroma pleasing to YHVH (1:14-17).**[249] The importance of this remains in the B'rit Chadashah, in which concern for meeting the spiritual needs of **the poor** ranks high on the list of priorities of **Yeshu**a and **His apostles (Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 6:20; Romans 15:26; James 2:5-6).**[250]

He is to slaughter the lamb of the guilt offering; and the priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the tip of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. The priest is to take some of the olive oil and pour it into the palm of his own left hand, and sprinkle with his right hand some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before ADONAI. The priest is to put some of the oil in his hand on the tip of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, on the big toe of his right

foot – in the same place as the blood of the guilt offering. Finally, the priest is to put the rest of the oil in his hand on the head of the person being purified, to make atonement for him before ADONAI. He is to offer one of the doves or young pigeons, such as the person can afford, whatever his means suffice for – the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering – with the grain offering; thus the priest will make atonement before ADONAI for the person being purified. Then as a summary on the subject, Moshe stated: **Such is the mitzvah for the person who has leprosy if he cannot afford the usual elements used for his purification (14:25-32).**

However, there was one small problem. This concluding **purification** ceremony for **the** needy **leper** was never used during the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da – The Dispensation of Torah**). **Leviticus 14:1-57** describes **the six items the leper** needed to bring to be cleansed, what **a** needy **leper** should bring, **the seven days** in **the chamber of the lepers** in the Court of the Women, and the concluding purification ceremony. This chapter contains the most extensive instruction concerning **purification** in the TaNaKh. But that **chamber** stood empty for centuries, awaiting the coming of **the Messiah** to **heal a Jewish leper** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Gl – The Three Messianic Miracles**).



But think of those **lepers** whom **Yeshua** cleansed during **His** earthly ministry (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Id – Jesus Heals Ten Men with Leprosy**). During **their** final purification, **they** were marked with **blood** on **their right ear, thumb and big toe**. Those were the same markings that a **priest** received. Did **the leper** become **a priest**? Also, **the leper** was, more or less, anointed with **oi**l. Was **the leper** then regarded as an anointed one, or *mashiach*? No. **The leper** was neither **priest** nor *meshiach* except in the general sense that **all Isra'el** is a **nation**

of priests, and **all Isra'el** carries the anointing of **God's Spirit**. Seen from this perspective, we realize how the ceremonies of **leprosy** beautifully illustrate our transformation from **the kingdom of sin and death** to **the kingdom of life and righteousness**.

Leprosy is a good metaphor for the unredeemed, mortal condition. Though we live and walk, we are dying. Before our recreation in **Messiah** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Bd – A New Creation**), our lives are ever tainted with the corruption of our flesh. **The leper** suffers because **he** is marked by uncleanness, but worse yet, **he** generates uncleanness. So too, the unredeemed are marked by **sin** and yet continue to generate **sin**. Like **the leper**, the unredeemed are barred from the presence of **God**. They cannot enter the assembly.

We are spiritual **lepers**. Our human tendency is to minimize the seriousness of our condition. We would rather suppose that our ailment is only a minor rash, nothing to worry about. A man tells himself that he is, after all, a pretty decent fellow. In reality though, our diagnosis is far grimmer than we could ever imagine. Our flesh is corrupt and our essential being is contaminated. Our separation from the sacred is absolute. Without healing and purification, we are an utterly **leprous** race.

Yet when **the Leper** is purified (see **The Life of Christ Cn – Jesus Heals a Jewish Leper**), a startling transformation takes place. **His** initial cleansing (with **blood** and water) and subsequent immersion bring **him** into immediate fellowship. **He** enters the assembly and the Tabernacle of **God**. Clean shaven like one newly born, **he** waits **seven days** for the completion of **his** purification. At the end of **his** purification **he** offers sacrifices for atonement and cleansing. **He** is marked with the signs of **priestly** initiation. **He** is anointed with **oil**.

So too with the redeemed. We are born-again through **blood** and water, immersed into **Messiah**. We are brought immediately into the House of **God**. We are initiated into a holy priesthood by means of **blood** and **oi**l. Again, the combination of **the blood** and **oil** speak of the dual function of purification (atonement) and dedication. Believers should find this imagery vaguely familiar. We too are sprinkled with **blood** and anointed with **the oil of the Spirit** as we enter our **priesthood in Messiah**. We are cleansed by **the blood of Messiah**. We are **anointed with the Spirit of Messiah**.[251]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for loving both the poor and the rich, the young and the old, male and female. **For you are all sons of God through trusting in***

Messiah Yeshua . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female – for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua (Galatians 3:26, 28). *It is such a joy to know that we do not have to be perfect before coming to* ***You****, we can never be perfect. We need* ***Your*** *help to conquer temptations* ***(First Corinthians 10:13****). Thank* ***You*** *for taking us as we are when we come humbly before* ***You*** *bowing the knee and offering our love and our lives to* ***You*** *in deep gratitude for your rescuing us from the uncleanness of* ***sin*** *and its penalty of death. We praise* ***You*** *for being so Holy, Almighty, All-powerful, All-wise, a Forgiving* ***Savior*** *and Loving* ***Father****. We rejoice in our cleansing, but even more we rejoice in our eternal relationship with* ***You*** *as our loving* ***Father****, whom we delight to serve. In* ***Yeshua's*** *holy* ***Name*** *and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*