



Adapted from the sefer **במוצאי שבת** a collection of maamarim on  
תנא דבי אליהו given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

### Melave Malka Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5766

In Parshas Metzora, the Metzora approaches the Kohen hoping that the Kohen will declare him טהור. This declaration will end the period of **בדד ישב מחוץ** למחנה, his obligation to dwell alone, outside the camp of Am Yisroel.

In (ט"ז:), Chazal explain the reason for this unique punishment of **בדד ישב מחוץ למחנה**. "He created a rift between husband and wife, and between two friends, therefore the Torah says that he must dwell alone".

Solitary confinement is one of the harshest punishments imposed by a society. Isolation goes against human nature that Hashem created on the sixth day of the world. The Torah states, "לא טוב היות האדם לבדו", (It is not good for man to be alone). Throughout the description of creation, we find the declaration, "וירא אלוקים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאוד". A man living alone, is the only aspect of Hashem's creation defined as **לא טוב**.

The Torah describes man as **נפש חיה**, translated by Onkelos as **רוח ממללא**, imbued with the power of speech. That definition defines human beings as communicators, meant to connect with others. Solitary confinement is one of the harshest punishments imposed in the prison system. The inability to communicate and interact with others is often more than the prisoner can bear. Some even lose their minds during this period of isolation. Many prisoners would prefer corporal punishment to solitary confinement.

We know that Hashem imposes punishments **מידה כנגד מידה**. Since the Metzora created a rift between man and wife, or between two friends, he must isolate himself in order to understand the magnitude of his wrongdoing.



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The Torah also requires him to call out **טמא טמא**, warning people to stay away from him, so that they don't become **טמא**. On a simple level, this seems to be an additional punishment. Not only does he have to sit alone, outside of the camp, with his hair uncut and his clothes torn, but he also has to warn everyone to keep their distance.

I believe that we can approach this aspect of his punishment with a *chidush*, a new and deeper understanding. In their deepest level, all **דינים** and punishments in the Torah are actually expressions of Hashem's great **רחמים**. The Torah knows how difficult it is for the **מצורע** to be totally isolated. Therefore, the Torah understands that even the humiliating process of crying out **טמא טמא**, mitigates the suffering of the **מצורע**. It provides him with one limited channel of communication with others, even during his isolation.

Now that we understand the terrible suffering of loneliness, we have to open our eyes to see those lonely souls who are isolated, even though they live among us. These are the people who, for whatever reason, have been banished to the sidelines of society, where no one thinks of doing anything to ease their suffering. This phenomenon exists everywhere, and in all age groups. There are children, adults, and elderly who yearn for a little bit of recognition. They wait for someone, anyone, to exchange a few words with them.

We must do all we can to notice these solitary souls, to speak with them, and ease their loneliness. Over time, continued isolation can cause great emotional and spiritual damage.

Sometimes children are excluded by their peers, and their parents aren't aware of their situation and suffering. Often, teachers pay no attention to this aspect of their students' lives. Meanwhile, the **נפשות** of the children wither at a young age. Parents and teachers must learn to evaluate more than the child's knowledge of Torah. They must determine whether the child feels isolated from those around him.

There used to be a "Leper's hospital" in Yerushalayim. People afflicted with leprosy, often horribly disfigured by the disease, were sent there to live in isolation. Fear of infection kept away all visitors, even family members. Only



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one person, the Tzadik, R. Aryeh Levin zt"l, would regularly visit them, encourage them, and ease their loneliness.

A Gerrer chossid whom I know, told me that his daughter suffered from a life-threatening disease. Throughout her illness, he would go to his Rebbe the Bais Yisroel zt"l, to receive brochos for refuah shleima. Her situation became critical and he ran to the Rebbe, tearfully informing him that the doctors said that her life was in danger. The Rebbe instructed him to go to the Gaon and Tzadik R. Aryeh Levin zt"l, for he would be able to bring about a **ישועה שלמה**.

The chossid hurried to R. Aryeh's house and waited for the Rav to return. When R. Aryeh arrived, the chossid announced that he came on a shlichus from the Gerrer Rebbe, who instructed him to request a brocha for his daughter's total recovery. R. Aryeh protested that he didn't have the power to give such a brocha, and that he didn't know why the Gerrer Rebbe referred the chossid to him. The chossid persisted and refused to leave, reiterating the Rebbe's message that R. Aryeh would be able to bring about a **ישועה שלמה**.

R. Aryeh then said, "I have just returned from the Leper's Hospital. I give your daughter the zchus of that mitzva, so that she should be saved." The chossid hurried back to report to the Beis Yisroel. When the Rebbe heard what R. Aryeh did, he said "that was exactly my intention." The girl grew up and lived a long life. This story teaches us that such a rare mitzva has the power **להחיות מתים ממש**.

We must dedicate ourselves to seeking out suffering souls, encouraging them, and easing their loneliness. Then, Hakadosh Boruch Hu will see our suffering, and reverse our state of "**איכה ישבה בדד**", by redeeming us **בקרוב בימינו אכי"ר**.



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