



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



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Real Change

After being diagnosed with his spiritual disease, presumably for speaking Lashon Hara, the Torah seems to subject the Metzora to solitary confinement. “בדד ישב מחוץ למחנה. מושבו.” “He shall sit alone; outside the camp shall be his dwelling place.”

At first glance, it seems as if the Metzora is meant to be secluded entirely, maybe even from other Metzoraim; however, there are two issues with this approach: Firstly, most of the Rishonim interpret the pasuk to mean that he shall be alone from only other types of contaminated people (like a Zav or Tamei Meit) but is allowed to chill with his fellow lepers. Secondly, if he is meant to seclude himself when he interacts improperly, how does Moed Katan 7b state that the Sages do not give a

ruling of Tzaraat during a Chatan’s Sheva Brachot or when he is doing Aliyah L’Regel? Wouldn’t it be dangerous to leave him out in society at such a time during a big social gathering?

The Torah is teaching us a profound lesson about rehabilitation; it has two crucial stages. Contemplation of one’s flaws is essential to spiritual growth. By being surrounded by people with the same issues as him, it is inevitable that he will either realize his own problem by seeing it in others or form a support group amongst his new peers. He will have time to contemplate his actions until he learns how he can interact with his friends and community properly through his time surrounded by people dealing with the same struggle. The most crucial stage is the actualization of the change: when the Metzora has an opportunity to interact with society, whether it be at a large gathering like a Sheva Brachot or in his own new secluded hub of friends, the Chachamim gave the Metzora another chance to redefine himself, to socialize in the proper way. Specifically in these places are his biggest tests and his chance to rise back up from his lowly state. The Torah does not want us to be alone in our individual struggles. Rather, in every challenge we find ourselves we should surround ourselves with a support group, not give up, and give ourselves a chance to shine again.



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Birth and Rebirth

This week's parsha talks about two main subjects: tzara'at and halachot regarding childbirth. Why are these completely different things in the same parsha? How are they connected?

One of the main ideas of Jewish philosophy is that if a person sins, the halachic punishments aren't meant to harm them for the harm they caused, rather to benefit that person. How?! Suffering caused by punishment cleanses the נשמה.

In most cases, the good in a punishment isn't apparent, but with tzara'at, it's obvious. When a person is declared טמא and put in total isolation, they will learn not to speak הרע לשון because they have no one to speak to.

From cases of people with tzara'at, we learn that all of the Torah's 'punishments' are meant to help the sufferer correct their wrongdoings and start a new life without having to worry about old mistakes.

The parsha is called Tazria (hinting at conception and birth) to teach us that all punishments from the Torah are intended to help a person have a spiritual "rebirth" and correct their ways.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 22 pp. 70-73 and paraphrased from Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson's teachings) ■

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