

בשבת



אור ישראל

Self Inspired

PARSHAS
TAZRIA-METZORABY RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN
RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS

IS THERE A RABBI IN THE HOUSE?

Both *Parshas Tazria* and *Metzora* discuss the laws of the *metzora*, an individual who was afflicted with *tzaraas*. Once stricken, the sufferer must head to the *Kohein*, to ascertain the nature of the ailment — is this truly *tzaraas*, or something else? And even once it is determined to be *tzaraas*, the subject must still interact with the *Kohein*, determining whether it has grown or shrunk, until the *tzaraas* is gone.

Typical daily living didn't necessitate this sort of communication with a *Kohein*. The standard Jewish person would normally use a *Kohein's* services only in the *Beis HaMikdash*, when bringing a *korban*. Barring those times, the *Kohein's* role was minimal. Yet, when it comes to the diagnosis and remedy of *tzaraas*, the *Kohein* is the man of the hour, our conduct is determined by his pronouncement. Why does the Torah require the *Kohein*, here and now?

R' Moshe Feinstein,¹ (1895–1986) explains the fundamental truth hidden in the *metzora's* procedure. People may think that the spiritual and sacred is relegated to those times and places where spirituality is called for. The *Beis HaMikdash*, the abode of Hashem, is clearly a place where one is drawn to the divine.

But what about our everyday lives? Where is the spirituality in that? What about the physical ailments and distresses that we endure, is there any room for Hashem there?

R' Moshe explains that the purpose of utilizing the *Kohein* to diagnose what appears to be a physical disease is for us to understand that everything, truly everything, has a spiritual side to it. When one has a cold, stubs one's toe, or is stuck in traffic, it is because Hashem decreed it. And, in fact, because the malady is spiritual at its core, the antidote is spiritual as well. Torah, *mitzvos*, *teshuvah* are all ways to decrease the stress and tension in our lives.

Yes, the Torah requires us to employ physical cures as well,² but we do this knowing that the original cause is Hashem and His wisdom. Knowing that our physical lives will be improved if our spiritual lives improve is a great incentive to grow in our *avodas Hashem*.

¹ *Darash Moshe* on *Vayikra* 13:2

² *Yoreh De'ah* 336:1

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

Though we intellectually may know that Hashem is running everything, it can be difficult to feel Hashem in our lives. Are there any tricks one can use to engender the feeling of Hashem's presence?

There are always opportunities in our lives to inspire ourselves — opportunities that happen naturally, and others that we can create.

Most of *Shemonah Esrei* is one big exercise in recognizing Hashem's involvement in our lives. From healing, to livelihood, to various other challenges, it is all there in *Shemonah Esrei*. Simply focusing and meaning the words that we say is a great way to remind ourselves how Hashem is there, even during the most mundane times.

Additionally, some people have the practice to recite '*Parshas HaMann*' as a *segulah* for income. However, it is important to note that one's focus should not be on the *segulah*, rather, one should understand what one is saying, and focus on the fact that Hashem can provide for anyone, anywhere.¹

¹ *Mishnah Berurah* 1:13, *Sefer Mitzvos HaBitachon*, note 100.

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It is impossible to properly do mitzvos unless one values the study of Mussar. - R' Hillel Lichtenstein, *Avkas Rochel* 1:10

STUCK IN TRAFFIC WITH HASHEM

Michael Wendel* sat down across from his long-time *chavrusa*, Rabbi Aranovitch. “Rabbi, so nice to see you. I was waiting all week for this, I have a story to tell you.”

Rabbi Shmuel Aranovitch and Michael had been learning for four years, ever since a mutual friend had put them in touch with each other. Michael had been learning to expand on his Jewish knowledge, having grown up non-observant, and Shmuel had been looking for someone to teach. It was a perfect match, and they enjoyed each other’s company immensely.

“Last week you said something, and it really affected me. But let me describe the scenario, and then I’ll tell you what you said. I had to take my daughter to the doctor, nothing serious, just a regular checkup. The appointment was as early in the morning as I could make it, as I didn’t want to miss much work.

“Well, as you know, I recently changed jobs, and it’s really important for me to be on time. And, as luck would have it, I had a meeting scheduled for that morning, a meeting that I couldn’t put off. It was with the CEO of the company, and I had to attend.

“Now, it wasn’t really a conflict. The doctor appointment was scheduled for nine, the meeting was at eleven. I figured that the latest I’d be done was ten, and I would have plenty of time to make it to the meeting. But, you see where this is going, it was not meant to be.

“First, the doctor was running late. Apparently there was some sort of emergency, and he didn’t see us until nine thirty, or so. Then, they couldn’t process my payment properly, and after many tries, they said they’d send me a bill.

“I walked out of the office at about ten forty. I still needed to get my daughter to school, and then head over to work. Everything was close by, and assuming there was no traffic, I could still be by my office in ten minutes. But, of course, there was traffic.

“There I was, sitting behind a wall of cars, feeling my blood pressure rising. I was angry and frustrated, angry at the doctor, my boss, my daughter, and even my car. And then I remembered what you said. You told me that Hashem is not just in the synagogue, but He is everywhere. And when He gives us challenges, He waits for us to reach out to Him. So I did! I prayed! This was the first time I ever prayed outside of Yom Kippur.”

“Don’t tell me the cars parted like the Red Sea,” laughed Rabbi Aranovitch.

“No, not at all. The cars stayed the same. But I did still get to work on time, and I was much calmer than I would have been, and get this — the CEO was late because of traffic!”

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- When Hashem decrees an ailment on a person, He also decrees when it will leave, who will heal it, and through which medication it will be healed.¹
- One’s perspective on healing should be similar to one’s perspective on employment. Everything comes from Hashem, but He has decreed one must put in *hishtadlus*, effort, to obtain a result.²

¹ *Yalkut Shimoni Shemos, Remez 289*

² *Chovos HaLevovos, Gate of Trust, Chap. 4*

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