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**RABBI WEIN'S  
WEEKLY  
BLOG**

The human body is subject to all sorts of pressures that affect its health and well-being. Modern medicine has shown how mental moods, stress and psychic disturbances can adversely affect physical health and appearance. As modern technology has exploded in our time, in spite of all of its advantages, and there are many, our lives have become more stressful... and unfortunately psychological disorders abound.

This is especially true here in Israel where the stress level is always high and the pressure of being part of the actual rebuilding process of the Jewish people is felt daily and in myriad ways. To this empiric lesson of societal life, the Torah adds another dimension of activity, which can and did have physical effects at the beginning of our history as a nation.

The plagues that are described in this week's Torah reading and their physical manifestations defy any easy and rational explanation. The rabbis of the Talmud ascribed these ills as being caused by slanderous speech and evil social behavior. Just as driving in heavy traffic will raise one's blood pressure significantly, so

to, speaking ill of other people also has a physical manifestation and not only a spiritual sin attached to it.

The Torah spends a great deal of space and detail to outline this physical manifestation and the necessity for purification of the body and the mind, in order to arrest and cure the disease. I do not know how this physical and spiritual connection does occur, but I do not know why mental stress and traffic jams should raise one's blood pressure either. Apparently, our Creator has wired us so that this is the case. And, so it is with the disease and plagues described in this week's Torah reading.

The kohen who was involved in the diagnosis and healing process for this plague is not seen or described as a medical expert. He is rather what we would call today a mental therapist, a spiritual and psychological guide who becomes God's agent to lift the diseased person out of his misery. There is a period of isolation and quarantine that becomes part of the process of healing. This is to allow for the introspection and self-analysis that is a necessary component of all psychological and mental healing.

A disease that is caused by spiritual failure as much as by physical malfunction must be cured by repairing the spiritual breach that originally caused it. And that can be accomplished only by a realistic and

honest appraisal of one's self... of one's spiritual strengths and weaknesses. Because of this truth, it is the spiritual kohen, the descendant of Aaron, who becomes the key catalyst in the process of recovery and rehabilitation.

The Torah is the true practitioner of holistic medicine. It aims to cure not only the mind or the body but rather the soul and the spirit of the human being as well. And this is an important lesson for all of us even in our time. The plague described in this week's Torah reading may not actually be identifiable to us, but its moral lesson and spiritual value remains eternal and constructive in our time as well. 🍷