

# Who (or who) heals?

Parshat Tazria/Metzora

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## I Kohen as diagnostician

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: When a person has on the skin of his body a rash, or a discoloration, and it develops into a scaly affliction on the skin of his body, it shall be reported to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests. The priest shall examine the affliction on the skin of his body: if hair in the affected patch has turned white and the affliction appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is skin blanch. When the priest sees it, he shall pronounce him tamay. But if it is a white discoloration on the skin of his body which does not appear to be deeper than the skin and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest shall isolate the affected person for seven days. And the priest shall see him on the seventh day, and if the affliction has held its color, if the affliction has not spread in the skin, the priest shall confine him another seven days. And the priest shall see him again on the seventh day, and if the affliction has faded, if the affliction has not spread on the skin, the priest shall declare him tahor. It is a rash; and he shall launder his clothes and be tahor. (Lev. 13:1-6)

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: This shall be the ritual for the one with skin blanch at the time he is to be cleansed. When it is reported to the priest, the priest shall go outside the camp. If the priest sees if the afflicted of skin blanching has been healed in the afflicted one....The priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meal offering on the altar, and the priest shall make expiation for him. Then he shall be tahor. (14:1-3,20)

## II Who heals?

1) So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "O God, pray heal her."  
Numbers 12:13

2) God said, "If you will heed the Lord your God diligently, doing what is upright in [God's] sight, giving ear to [God's] commandments and keeping [God's] laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I the Lord am your healer." (Exodus 15:26 )

3) Most donkey drivers are evil; most camel drivers are righteous; most sailors are pious; the best of doctors go to gehinom; even the best butcher is partners with Amalek. (Kiddushin 82b.)

4) A person who goes in to bloodlet says: "May it be your will Oh Lord my God that this procedure cure me, for you are a loyal healer and your healing is true, for people do not have the right to heal but it is their custom to do so"

Abaye said, do not say this, as it was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishmael that from the verse, "And shall cause him to be thoroughly healed" (Exodus 21:19), from here we derive that permission is granted to a doctor to heal (Brachot 60a) [When two men quarrel and one strikes the other with stone or fist and he does not die but has to take to his bed...the assailant must pay for his idleness and his cure: רפא תרפא – heal, he shall heal him]

5) Because it is a mitzvah, that the doctor is required by law to heal patients [as the Sages said] "you shall return it to him (Deuteronomy 22:2) -this comes to include his body (Mishnah Torah, Hilchot Nedarim 6:8).

6) The Torah has granted the physician permission to heal, and it is a religious duty which comes under the rule of saving an endangered life. If he withholds [treatment] he is regarded as one who sheds blood; (Shulahn Arukh, Yore Deah 336:1)

7) The physician is forbidden to take payment for his wisdom and learning but he may receive payment for his trouble and lost time. (YD 336:2)

8) And although Shabbat is a time to refrain from petition, yet we hope and pray that healing is at hand.

9) Whoever visits one who is ill takes away 1/60 of his pain. (Nedarim 39b)