

MAGIC OR TORAH?

Text:

The previous Parsha concludes with the prohibition against witchcraft and divination. Emor begins with the words, “Emor el HaKohanim” – speak to the priests.

[Leviticus 21:1]

“Speak to the priests” – what is written prior to this topic? [The prohibition against witchcraft. The Torah therefore proceeds to mention the Kohanim, meaning to say that] if you shall ask, “From whom shall we seek [guidance]? It is stated,¹ “You shall come to the Kohanim of the tribe of Levi, and to the judge who shall be in that time... According to the Torah which they shall instruct you [you shall conduct yourselves]...”

[Midrash Tanchuma]

Question:

- A) The question, “From whom shall we seek guidance?” implies that we *must* have some way of knowing the future. Why doesn’t God simply answer that humans cannot know the future?
- B) What *is* God’s answer? Judges and Kohanim don’t know the future!

Answer:

As human beings, we crave the reassurance that we are on the right track. This instinctive need can tempt us to seek security in divination and other occult methods. God addresses this natural drive by reassuring us that if we follow the Torah’s instructions for living, we can rest assured that He is leading us in the proper way.

Message:

Life is fraught with uncertainty, and insecurity propels us to seek reassurance in unsavory practices. But there is a better way: when we commit ourselves to Torah’s guidance, we can live with confidence and serenity, knowing that we are on the proper path. While we are not prophets, God *does* speak to us; we may not know the future, but we know that we are on the right track.

¹ Deuteronomy 17:9