

"The one to whom the house belongs shall come and declare to the kohen, saying, 'Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house.'" (14:35)

It is interesting to note that when the *Torah* refers to someone who has an affliction on his body, it says, *ivfu kt tcuvu*, "He shall be brought to the *kohen* (14:2). In contrast, in regard to a plague afflicting a house it says here "He shall come to the *kohen*." What reason is there for this disparity between the two plagues ? *Horav Dovid Feinstein, Shlita*, makes a noteworthy observation. The plagues which strike one's body, clothes, or home are an indication from Above that something is wrong with this person. The affliction progresses from the individual to his garments until finally his home is struck, as well.

Someone whose body has been afflicted has a natural tendency to rationalize the plague. He researches every sickness known to man, rather than concede to the truth, that this affliction is an indication of his own spiritual failing. It takes a special person to immediately admit to his own shortcomings. Consequently, it is sometimes necessary for this person to be brought to the *kohen* for a ruling regarding this plague.

When the affliction has "graduated" beyond his body and has reached his house, it indicates that the plague is out of control. The spiritual contaminant has spread to the rest of his household; his family has learned to emulate his evil ways. Only an egotistic individual places his family in danger of being punished in order to protect himself. When the well-being of his loved ones is at stake, one tends to change his attitude. He no longer needs encouragement to go to the *kohen*.

It would serve us well to contemplate these words. We must realize that we are our children's ultimate role models. Our actions speak louder than our words, which may send mixed messages. We may not care about ourselves, but what right do we have to "inspire" our children to think or act in a manner which might be less than acceptable ? Perhaps, our obligation towards our children can serve as the greatest motivating factor for our positive spiritual development.