

## **"And the Kohen shall command to take for him that is to be cleansed... And cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop." (14:4)**

The leper who had prepared to be cleansed was to bring cedar wood, a symbol of might and strength, together with a hyssop, which represents the opposite. Why should his offering reflect these two contradictory characteristics? *Horav Moshe Shternbuch Shlit"a* suggests the following message may be derived from this *pasuk*. These plagues were visited on a person as a punishment for various spiritual offenses. One of these sins was "jurv ,uxdw" which can be defined as arrogance and haughtiness. This trait often translates itself into vulgarity, indicating lack of spiritual refinement and sensitivity which should be the hallmark of a Jew. The cedar wood addressed itself to such people. Another form of arrogance must be acknowledged. Certain people make every effort to demean others, while displaying themselves as humble and unpretentious. Their arrogance is cloaked in a veneer of humility! This is the reason that the *Torah* mandated these two contradictory symbols. One must himself be humble like a hyssop twig, but, on the other hand, extol his fellow man as a cedar.