

Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house. (14:35)

In *Meseches Negaim 12:5*, *Chazal* state that one should not assert that he definitely saw a plague. Rather, he should say that he saw what appears to be a plague. A number of reasons are given for this *halachah*. The **Torah Temimah** suggests a somewhat novel interpretation. The *Kohen* is the one who renders decisions regarding *negaim*, plagues. It would, therefore, be brazen on the part of anyone else to issue a decision in the presence of the *Kohen*. By saying that he has a plague, the *metzora* seems to be rendering a decision concerning himself in the presence of the *Kohen*. This concept applies also to the *Rav*/spiritual leader of a community.

Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita, elaborates concerning the respect due to the *rav* of a community, regardless of its size or the *rav's* stature. He relates that during a visit to a small town, the *Yeshuos Yaakov* was questioned in regard to a certain *halachah*. He responded by permitting it. After awhile, he reminded himself that the *Taz* clearly forbade it. The *Yeshuos Yaakov* said that the fact that he had made a mistake did not surprise him. He should have been cognizant that in a community that has a *rav*, no one else has the *siyata dishmaya*, Divine assistance, to render a correct decision. Hashem supports the *rav* of a community, intervening on his behalf when necessary.