

This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification. (14:2)

We no longer have the affliction/purification process of *tzaraas*, spiritual leprosy. This is the consequence of a degraded spiritual condition. Degradation applies at a time and circumstance in which our people are on an elevated moral standing, so that the failing is noticeable in contrast to the spiritual status we are expected to maintain. Since we lost our *Bais Hamikdash* and our spirituality plummeted, we have no longer been on the spiritual plateau deserving of such a manifestation. To put it in simple terms, the term “sick” applies to one who is otherwise healthy. Likewise, in spiritual health, one must be spiritually robust in order for the affliction to manifest a contrast.

We find that David *Hamelech* prayed that one who recites *Tehillim* be considered as if he were occupied in the laws of *negaim* and *ohalos*, spiritual afflictions and areas of spiritual contamination and purity. These are one of the most difficult areas of Torah law. To achieve erudition in the laws of *negaim* and *ohalos* demands much toil and devotion to studying the subject. Reciting *Tehillim* does not seem to be that demanding. How are these two connected?

Horav David, zl, m'Tolna, explains that *negaim* distinguish themselves in the fact that *tumah* and *taharah* – rendering of spiritual defilement or purity – are determined by the *Kohen* and dependent upon his articulation of the word: *tamei*. *Tumah* and *taharah* must be vocalized by the *Kohen*. This is the case even if the *Kohen* was unnerudite and not fluent in the laws of *negaim*, even if the *Kohen* were not in complete control of his faculties, a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, conversant in the laws. Even if such a *Kohen* is asked to render his opinion, the actual pronunciation of “*tamei*” must be delivered by the *Kohen*, who might – in such a situation – be clueless to the proceedings. Such a *Kohen* knows not what he is saying, because he is unaware of the law. Yet, his enunciation of the word “*tamei*” renders the afflicted person a *metzora*.

This is what David *Hamelech* requested of Hashem. When a Jew pours out his heart in the recitation of *Tehillim* – even if he knows not what he is saying – ie. he does not understand the profundity of the words that he is reciting – it should be as effective as the *Kohen*’s elocution of the word “*tamei*.” Just reading the words of *Tehillim* with sincerity should be able to arouse Heavenly compassion, so that whatever decree hangs over us is rescinded. We now have some idea of the sanctity of the “words” of *Sefer Tehillim*.