

"He shall be brought to Aharon HaKohen, or to one of his sons, the Kohanim." (13:2)

The Torah authorizes only the *Kohen* to pronounce a plague as *Tzaraas*. Only the *Kohen* can render a plague *tamei*, spiritually impure. *Chazal* (*Mishnah Negaim* 3:1) teach that all are fit to view or diagnose a *nega*. Only a *Kohen* can make the pronouncement of *tamei* or *tahor*. If a *Kohen* is (sadly) not knowledgeable in the laws pertaining to *Tzaraas*, we seek a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, who is proficient in recognizing the purity or impurity of a given plague, and he instructs the *Kohen* concerning what pronouncement to make.

The *Tolna Rebbe, Shlita*, quoted his grandfather *Horav David, zl, m'Tolna* who cited the *Midrash (Tehillim)* that *David HaMelech* petitioned *Hashem* that whoever recites *Tehillim* should be viewed (on the same level) as if he were studying the most difficult topics of *Negaim* and *Ohalos*. This means, explains the *Rebbe*, that even a simple Jew, who is not erudite and may not know the meaning of the words that he is reciting, should nonetheless be considered as if he were studying the most complex issues of *Torah* law. He explained that *David HaMelech* specifically selected *Negaim* as his example. Just as regarding rendering a person *tamei*, a *kohen* who is not a scholar and on his own is unable to designate *tamei* or *tahor*, can be assisted by a *Torah* scholar who instructs him what to say. This teaches us that, at times, uttering "words" without really understanding their depth has efficacy. So, too, surely reciting *Tehillim* – even without a proper understanding of the meaning of the words – should, nevertheless, be efficacious and serve as a merit for the person.

To explain this idea further, it is critical that one understands the nature of *Sefer Tehillim*. *David HaMelech* wrote these heartfelt *tefillos* from the depths of his soul. They express every human emotion – happiness, fear, sorrow, and repentance. Reciting *Tehillim* grants us the opportunity to channel these emotions in times of need or gratitude. One need not be an erudite Torah scholar to express his heartfelt feelings while reciting *Tehillim*. We join with Jews throughout the millennia, who have used this prayer book as a means to connect to and bond with *Hashem*.