

The Morris M. Horowitz Kollel

732 813 0682 / morrismhorowitzkollel@gmail.com

R' Yitzchok Blau
Nasi Hakollel

Moshe Rothenberg
Rosh Kollel



פרשת תזריע מצורע / Parshas Tazria-Metzora

The very first Rashi on this weeks Parsha brings down a Medrash in Vayikra Rabbah (14; 1). ר' שמלאי says that just as the creation of mankind came only after the creation of the animals and birds, **במעשה בראשית**, in the beginning of creation, so too, the Torah laws that relate to the creation of man follow the laws of bird and beast which we were taught at the end of last weeks Parsha. However, this self-same Medrash states that if a person is of merit, he is told that he preceded all of creation, but if he is not of merit, he is told that the mosquito was created before him. (יתוש קדמך)

The Ksav Sofer explains that the body of a person is weaker in nature than the rest of the animal kingdom. Animals find their food waiting for them in the forests and fields and are no in need of garments with which to clothe themselves, whereas humans must toil by the sweat of their brow in order to win their bread and procure their clothing.

Despite all these facts, humankind is crowned above all other creatures that exist in the world because we have a purpose and a goal. That is, to serve Hashem and to toil in His Torah. This purpose is what uplifts us to this exalted level.

Be that as it may, this only rings true when a person is merit-worthy because he is fulfilling his purpose with belief in Hashem and is striving to accomplish his goals. However, if a person does not act in accordance with his responsibilities as a human, he does not merit this exaltation and truth be told, beast, cattle and bird are deemed greater than he. "יתוש קדמך", even the lowly mosquito was created before him.

There is an Inyan to learn the 5 (6) chapters of Pirkei Avos (Ethics of our Fathers) on Shabbos afternoon after Mincha, one chapter a week, during the six weeks between Pesach and Shavuos. It is therefore appropriate to add an explanation of the Mishna in Avos in **פרק ד משנה ו** based on our Medrash.

“רבי יוסי אומר, כל המכבד את התורה, גופו מכבד על הבריאות. וכל המחלל את התורה, גופו מחלל על הבריאות.”

We can explain this Mishna to mean as follows: Rebbe Yose says, "If a person honors the Torah by fulfilling his purpose in this world, he is exalted above all the other creations. However, if **חס ושלום**, he desecrates the Torah and does not fulfill his purpose, his body becomes desecrated and is indeed weaker and lesser than all other creations.

Now more than ever is the time to focus on our true purpose and goals. What in particular separates and elevates us over the rest of the animal kingdom? What is the difference between man and beast? We are all faced with our own opportunity to make the most of our current situation. Let's use this time to learn as much Torah as we possibly can and strengthen our Emunah (belief) in Hashem. We can come out of this stronger, having accomplished something, with another notch in our belts. Let's not squander this chance that Hashem is giving us to dig down deep and tap into our reserves of patience and good middos that we want to polish and refine. Let's live up to Hashems expectations of us as His servants. Then we shall be exalted.