



# TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Tazria-Metzora

April 16, 2021

## A Taste of Torah Best for Last

by Rabbi Yosef Melamed

Have you ever joined some friends in a race or other competition of speed? If you have, then the refrain “last one is a rotten apple” is probably familiar. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 38a) wonders why Adam was created last, after all the other elements of creation. Seemingly, Man is the crown of creation. Shouldn’t he have been created first? The Talmud offers various explanations as to why Adam was created last.

According to the Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Loew; 1512/1526-1609), in his *Chidushei Aggados* commentary on the aforementioned passage of Talmud, the various reasons given by the Talmud are all part of one point: Adam was created last to convey his essence and to define his being. Mankind is not the crown of Creation merely because he is superior. Rather, Man is the crown of Creation because he encompasses everything that was created before him and he thus gives their existence meaning. By utilizing all of the forces and beings of Creation to serve G-d and to perform His commandments, those forces and beings are uplifted and incorporated into the great purpose of declaring G-d’s glory. Thus, Man was created last to show that his greatness lies in his ability to bring the entirety of the universe together in the important mission of revealing G-d’s glory in the world.

The Medrash (Vayikra Rabba 14:1) applies this discussion to this week’s parsha. The beginning of Parshas Tazria discusses the laws of ritual purity and impurity associated with a woman who bears a child. The rest of the parsha, as well as Parshas Metzora, details many of the other laws of ritual purity and impurity that are related to humans. The Medrash points out that Parshas Tazria is preceded by Parshas Shemini, which ended with the laws of kosher and non-kosher animals. Explains the Medrash, “Just as the creation of the Animal Kingdom came before the creation of Mankind, so, too, the laws (or purity and impurity) associated

with animals precede the laws (of purity and impurity) associated with Mankind.”

The Maharal (Gur Aryeh Vayikra 12:1) wonders what the connection is between the laws of animals and humans and their respective creation. As explained, the purpose of Adam’s being created last was in order to define the purpose and mission of Mankind. That explanation makes perfect sense when it comes to the order of Creation, but how is that explanation relevant to the precedence of the laws of purity and impurity of animals to those of Mankind?

The Maharal explains as follows: The Talmud (Shabbos 88a) points out that after describing what occurred during each day of Creation, the Torah delineates the completion of that day. “And it was evening and it was morning a first day... a second day... a third day...” and so on. On the sixth day of Creation, the day of the creation of Mankind, the Torah concludes “and it was evening and it was morning, the sixth day.” The stress of “the” sixth day, as opposed to the other days, which are merely noted as a day, implies an elevated degree of importance for this sixth day. The Talmud explains that “the” sixth day refers to the sixth day of the month of Sivan, more than two millennia later, when the Jewish People would accept the Torah at Sinai. Until then, the entirety of Creation hung in balance; if the Jews were to accept the Torah, then the world would continue to exist. However, if the Jews would fail to do so, then the Universe would revert back to emptiness and nothingness; it would cease to exist!

This means that not only is fulfillment of the Torah and serving G-d the point of Creation, it is the very thing that gives Creation its ability and power to exist in the first place. On a deeper level, explains the Maharal, it can be said that the acceptance of Torah – which, practically, means the ongoing study and fulfillment of Torah

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### Stories for the Soul

#### Silence Is Golden

*Based on a story on jewishpress.com*

The Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1838-1933) once received a visit from a student who had just returned from his first pulpit assignment. From the downcast look on his pupil’s face, Reb Yisroel knew immediately that things had not gone well.

“Tell me, my son, which *vort* (Torah thought) did you tell to your congregation? How did they receive it?”

“Rebbi,” the young rabbi answered, “you always told us to preach to the Jewish people, to show them the beauty of Torah and *mitzvos* and bring them to *teshuva* (repentance). So I told them everything, every wonderful tale of *teshuva* and Torah that I could remember. I spoke for over two hours, telling of this great mitzvah with all the skill and oratory at my command.”

“What was their reaction?” the Chofetz Chaim asked.

“Nothing. Absolutely nothing! It was terrible. For two hours the congregation sat there not moving an eyelash, not uttering a whisper, and then, when I finished, there was no reaction at all. No one came over to give me a *yasher koach*, shake my hand or even ask me a single question. What a disaster! I’m so embarrassed, I could never return there again.”

The great sage turned to him and asked, “You mean that for two hours a synagogue full of Jews sat completely quiet

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## Kollel Happenings

### SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM ON SHABBOS AFTERNOON

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Centers in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. For sponsorships and more info, email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### MILE HIGH TORAH PODCAST FROM THE KOLLEL

A wide variety of Kollel classes and short, inspiring Torah thoughts are now available on many podcast platforms such as Spotify, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts and Amazon Music. You can also access the latest podcasts at the Kollel's website, [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org).

### BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

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## Halacha Riddles

**This week's question:** When would the blessing on an item be upgraded due to the passage of time, with no human intervention?

**Answer:** If one eats an unripe (but somewhat edible) fruit or vegetable, the proper blessing is *shehakol* (see Mishna Berura 202:18 and 204:13). Once the fruit or vegetable ripens, one would make

the proper *bracha* of *ha'eitz* or *ha'adama*, respectively.

(See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 202:2 regarding unripe grapes, which may require a *ha'adama* blessing.)

**This week's question:** How could the required blessing on an item be downgraded twice due to the passage of time, with no human intervention?

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Saadia Gaon - Part XXV

Rabbi Saadia wrote many *sefarim* (Torah works) during his lifetime. These works covered many areas of Torah and Judaism, including the Torah, the Talmud, halacha (including many

responsa), Kabbala, prayer, philosophy, the Hebrew language, Hebrew grammar, religious poetry, the Jewish calendar, and refutations against heretical ideas and movements.

## A Taste of Torah

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from that moment of acceptance - is the completion of the Creation of the world. Until the Torah was accepted, the world was not considered fully created, because it lacked the very backbone of its sustainability.

Therefore, explains the Maharal, it is very appropriate that the same exact lesson that appears during the period of Creation be repeated in the discussion of the Torah laws governing those creations, because those laws are actually what completes that creation. And just as during the Seven Days of Creation, Mankind was created last to show that his purpose is to

lead of all of creation in manifesting G-d's glory, the laws governing the ritual purity and impurity of Mankind come after the laws of kosher and non-kosher animals, to show that through those very laws, studied and observed by Mankind, the rest of creation is given its fulfillment, purpose, and, ultimately its life, and sustainability.

Let us endeavor to take this powerful message and lesson to heart, and to continue to give meaning and life to the rest of Creation by studying and fulfilling the mitzvos and expressing G-d's glory into the world!

## Stories for the Soul

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listening to words of Torah? No one turned to his neighbor to exchange idle gossip, tell an embarrassing tale, or pass a disparaging remark?

"The Vilna Gaon quotes a Medrash saying that for every instant that a person holds his silence he will receive the highest rewards. Just think of the reward that you have brought them for two whole hours of silence, during which they were also performing the great mitzvah of Torah

study by listening to your sermon. The silence was a signal of your victory, not defeat, for they left the synagogue with your words still on their minds. What greater success could you want?"

This week's parsha discusses *tzara'as*, a spiritual illness that manifests as a skin ailment. Our Sages teach that one of the causes of this malady is *lashon hara*, slander. It is thus imperative for a person to watch his speech to whatever degree possible.

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