



Original Painting By:  
YORAM RAANAN

# The Vastness Of Existence IS NOT FOR MAN TO INDULGE

## YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Tazria

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

### One Must be Able to Discern

CLICK TO VIEW!



### The External Removal Affects the Internal

CLICK TO VIEW!



### Korbanos and their Order

CLICK TO VIEW!



### The Lips of the Kohen are the Keepers of the Faith

CLICK TO VIEW!



### A Divine Reaction to Egregious Behavior

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. When a suspicious leprous lesion appears, one goes to the *Kohen* for evaluation
2. The *Kohen* determines whether the person is a leper.
3. Leprosy is not degenerative, but an intense white lesion which is only a tag.
4. It results from excessive gossip, extreme arrogance or miserliness.
5. Seforno: Only the *Kohen* is qualified in this role because the prophet depicts the *Kohen* as the

- keeper of the religion.
6. He advises the Leper how to repent and pray for recovery.
7. The *Kohen* as keeper of the faith also prays for him.
8. On *Rosh Hashanah* we say, "Repentance, Prayer & Charity removes the harshness of the decree.
9. Commentators: Even if one repents one must pray his repentance should be accepted.

# YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Tazria

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

## G-d Gives EVERYONE A Chance

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Isaiah: G-d wants to vindicate man rather than find him guilty and condemn him.
2. *Midrash*: Adam was told "From this you may eat from that you may not; the day you will eat, you will die."
3. Adam ate of the tree: G-d alluded to him two times he could repent and be absolved.
4. Adam did not repent and was driven from the Garden. Why didn't he repent?
5. R' Yisrael Salanter: When Jews hear the Shofar blast before *Rosh Hashanah* it causes stirrings of repentance.
6. During the First Temple, when the Prophet instructed them to repent, they said they could not.
7. They believed they were beyond spiritual reinstatement and couldn't undo the wrong.
8. We understand transgression on a superficial level knowing we did wrong but not appreciating its destructive ramifications.
9. Adam, as G-d's handiwork, grasped the level of catastrophic destruction of his sin and he could not repent— thus being subject to death.

## The Capacity of Joy to the UnEntitled

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. A male child is circumcised on the 8th day.
2. There is no *Torah* obligation to celebrate the occasion.
3. *Midrash*: G-d says, "See to what degree the Jewish People endear the *Mitzvos* and rejoice in them; I will add joy to the humble."
4. One rejoices when feeling he's come upon something of special value.
5. The core of disappointment is expectation; Entitlement does not allow joy.
6. Entitlement: One feel denied of what he deserves.
7. Endearment of *Mitzvos* indicates the value one gives to the opportunity of performing a *mitzvah*.
8. Isaiah: To The humble I will add joy.
9. The humble one has no sense of entitlement; he esteems the *Mitzvos* so that he will make a financial outlay.
10. "To the humble I will add joy": he has the capacity to be fully appreciative.

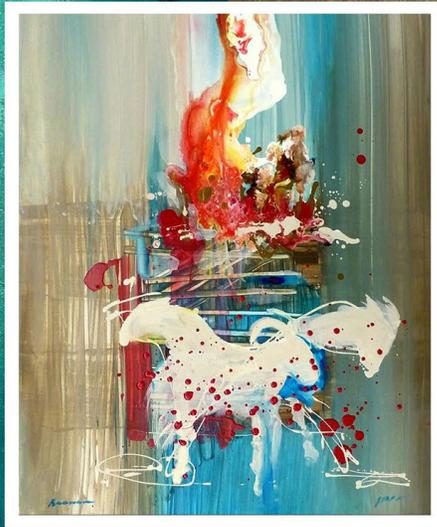
## The Blueprint Designed to Accommodate Man

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. The *Torah* discusses the laws of purity pertaining to a woman who has given birth to a male or female.
2. This follows the previous delineation of the *kosher* and non-*kosher* species.
3. *Midrash*: Just as the animals and birds were created before man, so too their laws were stated before man.
4. Rabeinu Bachya: Man as final act of creation indicates: all that preceded him was created to accommodate his purpose & objective.
5. Analogous to one who builds a residence; the blueprint is designed to address all amenities to be needed by the occupant.
6. All that was created prior to man was to address his material & spiritual needs.
7. The physical makeup and infrastructure of existence parallels the spiritual needs of man.
8. This is shown through the sequential order of the laws that pertain to species of animals & birds followed by the laws pertaining to man.

## Weekly Torah Commentary Series: *Tazria*



Original Painting By:  
YORAM RAANAN

# The Vastness Of Existence IS NOT FOR MAN TO INDULGE

### The Objective of Life

The *Parsha* begins with the laws pertaining to a woman who conceives and gives birth to a male.

King David in *Tehilim (Psalms)*: “Later and earlier You formed me...”

*Midrash*: Regarding this verse from *Tehillim*, “Later” refers to the fact that the human being was the last to be created in the order of creation. “Earlier” is referring to the fact that the human being was the first and only creature to be held culpable for his actions because he possesses free choice. If one succeeds because he fulfilled his objective in life by investing himself in spirituality, “they will say to him – You preceded all existence.” Why is this so?

*Bereishis*: “The Spirit of G-d was hovering over the waters...” This refers to the soul (*neshama*), which was created before existence. However if one follows the path of materialism and is oblivious to his spirituality, “they will say to him – the flea preceded you in creation.”

If one were to share this *Midrash* with any rational individual he would have difficulty comprehending the profundity of this message and seemingly, rightfully so. It is true that the flea may have preceded the human being in creation; however, the human species is more advanced in every aspect of his existence. Intellectually, creatively, and experientially, the human being far surpasses this insignificant creature, the flea.

*Rabbeinu Bachya* in his introduction to *Shimini*: that the fact that man was introduced into creation only after it was completed is an indication that he is the most special. It is analogous to a builder constructing an elaborate home; only after the structure is fully completed and livable will he summon its residents. Thus, since all existence preceded man, it is an indication that it was created only for his sake. If so, it is understood that the flea was created before man. How then do we understand the words of King David?

*Chazal*: The average person when he passes away has not even fulfilled half of his life’s material desires

and aspirations. As much as the individual persevered to fulfill his material desires, he will not succeed in accomplishing half of them. It is one's strong desire for material that drives and motivates him to pursue his aspirations despite the fact that he may not attain them at all. If one were able to extricate himself from his need to satisfy his desire, he would be able to objectively assess and understand the futility of the pursuit of a life that is singularly based on the material.

All existence was created to accommodate one's spiritual development. This is indicated by the fact that the creation of the Soul (*neshama*) preceded physical existence. However, regarding Man's relevance to purpose (which is the perfection of his spirituality), he was only introduced to creation when it was in a state of completion. However if one does not relate or understand his objective in existence, by pursuing the material, his level of accomplishment is even less than the flea that was created before him. The flea has minimal needs and functions fully as it is meant to do; thus, he achieves his purpose within material existence fully. However, the human who does not address his potential and lives as the intellectual animal – devoid of spirituality – he is culpable for his failing. His accomplishment is thus less than the flea that had preceded him.

*Midrash*: The human being has endless needs– whether it is on a developmental level or caring for his delicate requirements. He must be continuously assisted in attaining his sustenance and other personal amenities. An animal has no such difficulties. The human on the other hand was created to address his spiritual potential despite his physical context. Thus, it is in his best interest to invest his life in the pursuit of spirituality and not materialism.

## **Torah – Understanding the Blueprint for Existence**

*Rashi* in *Tazria*, citing the words of *Reb Simlaee*: “Just as the creation of man followed the creation of the domesticated, undomesticated animals, and the birds, so too the laws pertaining to these species (dietary laws) precede the laws pertaining to man.” What is the profundity of *Reb Simlaee*'s statement? The observation of *Reb Simlaee* is seemingly obvious.

*Midrash* in *Bereishis*: “He Gazed into the *Torah* and Created the world.” The *Torah* itself is the blueprint for all existence.

*Maharal* of Prague *z'tl*: The appellation “*Torah*,” which was chosen by G-d Himself to identify it, conveys to us its inherent purpose and value. This is “*l'horos*,” which means to give us direction in life. The *Torah* is not for the sake of intellectual pursuit; but rather, for understanding how one must invest his life in spirituality through its study and the observance of its *mitzvos*. If the *Torah* is a book of laws, which gives the Jew direction on how to lead his life, then what is its relevance to being the “blueprint” of Creation?

On the eve of the 15th of *Nissan* (*Pesach*), the *Torah* requires one to consume *matzah*, which is made with one of the five grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, and buckwheat). The grain that qualifies for the making of *matzah* must be susceptible to the leavening process; therefore, its chemical composition must have this nature. Only five grains qualify for the making of *matzah*.

In order for the *mitzvos* of the *Torah* to be relevant and fulfilled, creation had to be tailored specifically to accommodate all the positive and Negative Commandments. *Kosher* species of animals must have hides because the *Torah* tells us that the only material that qualifies to be fashioned into tefillin is the hide of a *kosher* species. This is meaning of the words of *Chazal*, “He Gazed into the *Torah* and Created the world.” Every aspect of creation only exists because it has some degree of relevance to the fulfillment of the *Torah*.

*Torah*: There is a Negative Commandment that one is not permitted to add or detract from the *Torah*. There is nothing lacking or superfluous in the *Torah*. It is perfect in every respect. Since existence was created only to be the setting for the fulfillment of the *Torah*, then it must be that there is nothing superfluous in creation. The order of Creation signifies that all existence was created to accommodate man who was the last to be brought into existence. In order for man to fulfill his purpose, he needed to be introduced into a world that had all the elements that he required to fulfill his purpose.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Rosh Hashanah*: G-d created birds with multicolored plumage and food with many tastes to accommodate the needs of man. Man could not function on an optimal level if the entire world was of uniform appearance and all his sustenance had the same taste. The purpose of this variety is not to accommodate man's physical needs, but rather to create a setting for him to maximize on his potential as a spiritual being – who exists within a physical context.

Just as the context of existence is only to accommodate the *Torah*, in a spiritual sense, so too the context of man is not for his physicality but rather to accommodate his spiritual needs.

*Reb Simlaee* is communicating to us the understanding that just as all species which preceded man, have relevance to existence only within the context of the laws which pertain to them (which is the *Torah* itself, so too, the relevance of man to existence is not his physicality but rather the laws which pertain to him.

*Rashi*: Until the creation of the human being, the appellation that is chosen for G-d is *Elokim*, which connotes the Attribute of Justice. However after the creation of man, the *Torah* refers to G-d as *Hashem Elokim*, which is the coalescing of the Attribute of Justice with the Attribute of Mercy because G-d saw that the world could not continue to exist within the context of Justice (because man is prone to fail). What relevance does the Attribute of Justice have to the creation of the world?

As we had explained earlier, the *Torah* itself is perfect—there is nothing superfluous in it. It is exact and precise. Since the *Torah* is the blueprint for existence, the process of creation had to come about in the most exacting and precise manner- Attribute of Justice. This further demonstrates that the world was created in a state of perfection only to accommodate the *Torah*, which is perfect and complete. Material existence is only to accommodate our spiritual development.

## The Eternal Blessing of G-d

*Tehillim*:, “He (G-d) does not associate Himself with *ra* (negative/evil).”

*Gemara* in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: There is nothing negative that is associated with G-d.

*Ramchal*: Evil does not emanate from G-d. Rather, evil only exists because of G-d withdrawing Himself. The vacuum that remains is *ra*.

*Midrash*: “The Name of G-d is not associated with anything which is *ra*. He only associates His Name with something that is good (*tov*). As we find when G-d Created “light” and “darkness,” He associated His Name with “light” and not with “darkness.” As the verse states, “And G-d called light “day” and darkness “night.” (The Name of G-d is not associated with night – which has an ominous connotation). Additionally when G-d Created

*Adam* and *Chava* the *Torah* states, “G-d blessed them.” However, when G-d cursed them after they sinned, His Name is not mentioned.

Our Rabbis tell us that there are three exceptions in which the Name of G-d is associated with something that appears to be negative. The first is the *meisis* (the seducer), as the *Torah* tells us regarding the snake who seduced *Chava* and convinced her to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. The second is one who does not abide by the words of the *Chachamim* (Rabbis).

King Solomon in *Mishlei* (*Proverbs*): “The one who breaches the fence (words of the *Chachamim*) should be bitten by a snake.” Finally, the Name of G-d is associated in the negative with the one who puts his faith in man, a mere mortal and blood, and not in G-d. As it states, “G-d said, ‘cursed is the one who relies on man...’” These are the three instances where G-d associates His Name in a negative context.

*Rambam*: One of the criteria for determining a true prophet of G-d is that he must accurately forecast the future. If the prophet forecasts that a blessing is to come about and it does not, then it is confirmed that he is a false prophet. However, if the prophecy was regarding something negative that was to take place and it does not, it is not an indication that he is a false prophet. This is because G-d’s mercy may have changed the course of events and did not allow the negative to transpire.

However, regarding something positive, if in fact something good was meant to occur and a prophet expressed it, G-d will not retract from that prophecy. When G-d associates His Name with something then it is not retractable because just as He is eternal and limitless so too anything associated with His Name must come to be. Thus, if His Name is associated with a curse, it could be retracted. G-d does not associate His Name with a curse because there is always a possibility that the Attribute of Mercy would intercede and overturn it based on the possibility of the subject doing *teshuvah* (repentance).

G-d’s Name is associated with something negative in three exceptions. These are examples of situations that should not be allowed to exist. For example, the *meisis* (the seducer) does not have any positive or redeeming qualities. G-d cannot tolerate the seducer – as we find regarding the snake in the Garden of Eden. Additionally, G-d’s Name is associated with cursing the one who does not abide by the fences of the *Chachamim*.

*Rabbeinu Yonah* in his work *Shaarei Teshuvah* (*Gates of Repentance*) citing *Chazal*: “The words of the *Chachamim* are even more beloved than the wine of the *Torah* (to G-d).” The underlying purpose of the *mitzvos* in the *Torah* is to bring one to a level of *yiras shamayim* (fear of heaven). As *Rabbeinu Yonah* states, “All *mitzvos* are the equivalent of appetizers (*parparos*) to *yiras shamayim*.”

The *Chachamim* legislated fences to protect one from inadvertently transgressing the *Torah* prohibition. Thus, if one abides and adheres to the Rabbinic fence, it is even a greater expression of fear of heaven. The laws themselves, which are the words of G-d, are less of a demonstration of *yiras shamayim* because they are G-d’s dictate. However to avoid transgressing something that is not G-d’s dictate, but out of a concern that one “may” transgress the Will of G-d – is a greater demonstration of *yiras shamayim*.

If it were not for the fences established by the *Chachamim*, the Jew over time would inevitably violate the *Torah* law itself. Thus, the *Torah* would be negated and nullified. Therefore if one does not abide by the fences legislated by the *Chachamim*, he is undermining the eternity of *Torah*. The Name of G-d is associated with cursing this individual because he is deserving of a curse that cannot be retracted because he is attempting to undermine the eternal *Torah*.

Similarly, one who places his faith in man, the mere mortal, and not in G-d, is undermining and denying the eternal Omnipotence of G-d. He is denying the eternal source of blessing, which is G-d Himself. Thus, the curse that comes upon him is one that is not retractable. Despite the fact that G-d does not associate His Name with *ra*, the *Mishna* in Tractate *Berachos* tells us that just as one must acknowledge G-d for the good, he must acknowledge Him for the bad. Just as one recites the *Shehecheyanu* Blessing when good fortune comes upon him, one recites the “*Dayan Ha’Emmes* – Blessed is the True Judge” when tragedy befalls him.

The fact that G-d does not associate His Name with *ra* is from His point of view. However, from our perspective we need to acknowledge that everything that comes from G-d is for the best and it is in our best interest. Thus, the Name of G-d, in this context of recognizing its value, is in essence good.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Nidah*: There is an example of one who initially curses G-d when difficulties befall him and then blesses Him after he discovers that the seeming

difficulty was in fact the greatest blessing of his life. A person was about to embark on his yearly purchasing trip which was vital for his livelihood. However, on the way to the port, his cart became disabled. He initially was enraged with G-d and cursed Him because he was going to miss the departure of the boat and consequently he would not have a livelihood for the upcoming year. Later he is informed that the boat he intended to board sank in the ocean.

Upon receiving this information, he blessed G-d for his good fortune that his cart became disabled – which caused him to miss the doomed voyage. The essence of whatever comes upon us in life is good, despite the fact that the situation may initially appear to us as negative. If one recognizes that whatever he experiences in life (for the good or for the bad), despite his lack of understanding, is ultimately in his best interest, then his life is experienced as “blessing.” However, if one cannot acknowledge that the negative is also for his good, then it is truly *ra*.

## The Pitfall of One’s Ego

*Torah*: “This shall be the law of the *metzora* (leper) on the day of his purification: He shall be brought to the *Kohen* ...the *Kohen* shall look, and behold! – the *tzaraas* (leprosy) affliction had been healed from the *metzora*. The *Kohen* shall command; and for the person being purified there shall be taken two live, clean birds, cedar wood, crimson thread, and hyssop.” What is the symbolism of the species that are needed for the purification of the *metzora*?

*Rashi*: Since the *metzora* initially contracted *tzaraas* (leprosy) because he “chirped/chattered” like the bird, by speaking words of no value which were in fact negative (*lashon hara*), he must take birds on the day of his purification (which also chirp). *Rashi* explains further that one becomes a leper because of his arrogance. When one is arrogant and self-centered, he feels that he is entitled to express himself in a manner that he chooses without any consideration for his fellow.

Since he does not value his fellow, he speaks negatively about him (*lashon hara*). Thus, the leper on the day of his purification must take wood from a cedar tree, which stands tall, and towers above other trees – just as the individual believed that he towered above his fellow. Additionally, the leper must take the hyssop, which is a lowly lying grass. The hyssop symbolizes

lowliness and humility –which is a quality needed the leper to recover from his leprous state. Similarly, the *metzora* must take a crimson thread, which is referred to as “*tolaas shani*” which literally means “a red worm.” This is a lowly creature. The leper takes these species in order to atone for his failing for not being humble.

*Kli Yakar*: The meaning of “the day of his purification” is the day that the *metzora* comes to the recognition of his spiritual failing. This is the beginning of the process that ultimately will allow the *Kohen* to come to examine him. Until that moment, he is steeped in his failing, which is haughtiness. It is only when he does *teshuvah* (repents) that he can recover. As all the Commentators explain, the *tzaraas* (leprosy) that is mentioned in the *Torah* is not a degenerative physical ailment. It is a condition that comes about because of a specific spiritual failing, namely – *lashon hara* (negative speech).

*Chofetz Chaim*: *Lashon hara* emanates from one’s self-centered arrogance.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Sotah*: G-d says that the world is not large enough to accommodate Him and the one who is arrogant. Thus, G-d withdraws from that individual.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Nidah*: One of the individuals that G-d cannot tolerate is the poor man who is arrogant. At least one could understand the basis for the arrogance of the wealthy man. However, what is the source of arrogance in the needy individual? Why is arrogance considered so contrary to G-d’s existence?

*Torah* at the beginning of *Shemos*: that *Moshe* had said to Pharaoh in the Name of G-d, “To what point are you refusing to be humbled (*lei aanos*)...”

*Rashi*: The word “*lei aanos*” is derived from the word “*aanie*” – poor man. Just as the poor man is humble because he recognizes his neediness, so too, Pharaoh needed to recognize that G-d is the dominant force and that he is only a beneficiary of His goodness. Arrogance interferes with one’s ability to process and understand the world for what it is. The world exists because of G-d’s Kindness and He is the source of all goodness. The haughty individual does not recognize this. Even when he performs G-d’s *mitzvos*, he does so for his own benefit and not for the sake of G-d. One who serves G-d solely for the sake of reward does so only because of self-interest.

*Gemara*: The value of performing a *mitzvah* or good deed without having the proper intent (*shelo l’shmah*) is that it has the potential to bring about the performance of

a *mitzvah* with the proper intent (*l’shmah*) – which is for the sake of G-d. *Adam* ate from the Tree of Knowledge, despite G-d’s commandment not to do so, only because of his own ego. As it is stated, “Man was created as a singular unit.” This could be misunderstood to mean that man is unique and special because of his own abilities and thus be self-serving. With this perspective, one could justify speaking in any manner that he so chooses – despite the negative consequence to his fellow.

*Gemara*: If one speaks *lashon hara*, he will contract *tzaraas* (leprosy), which can only be remedied through *teshuvah* and no other human means. This *teshuvah* process clearly confirms to the individual that the only way he can progress in life is if G-d Will’s it to be. When *Yaakov* our Patriarch had fled from his brother *Esav* to *Lavan*, he prayed that G-d should protect him.

*Midrash*: *Yaakov* prayed to be protected from adultery, murder, idolatry, and *lashon hara*. How could one’s concern for being subject to speaking *lashon hara* be within the same classification as the concern for violating the three Cardinal Sins (adultery, murder, and idolatry)? When one speaks negatively about another without any concern about the consequences, he can only do so if he does not value the essence of the other individual’s existence.

The devaluation of another is rooted in one’s arrogance. If one comes to the point of devaluing an individual through *lashon hara* it can ultimately come lead to something more serious. Because if one does not value the other person’s existence – as is indicated by his negative verbal expression – he may not value him to the point of even considering taking his life or committing adultery with his wife.

Similarly, the negative characteristic of arrogance may ultimately cause one to choose to become a pagan because paganism is self-serving. *Lashon hara*, an expression of one’s arrogance, is the first step in the direction, which can ultimately cause one to violate the three Cardinal Sins. *Yaakov* understood the root of all evil – ego/arrogance and thus prayed that G-d should protect him from adultery, murder, idolatry, and *lashon hara*.

## **The Human Being – a Composite of Physical and Spiritual**

*Torah*: The *Kohen* is the only person qualified for evaluating lesions and determining whether they

are leprosy or not. The pronouncement of the *Kohen* of either “*tamei* – contaminated” or “*tahor* – pure” determines the status of that individual. If the *Kohen* pronounces the person as contaminated then he is classified as a leper and must be sent out of all the camps of Israel. He must remain there in a solitary state and is not permitted to interact with other individuals. In order for the leper to be reinstated into the camp of Israel, the lesion must heal and only then can the *Kohen* pronounce him as “pure” to be reinstated.

*Gemara*: The cause of *tzaras* (leprosy) is *lashon hara* (evil speech). The Commentators explain that the leprosy discussed in the *Torah* is not the degenerative disease that we know as leprosy, but rather it is a lesion of a particular color that develops on the skin. The leprosy discussed in the *Torah* no longer exists.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos*: “There is no death without sin.” Meaning, spiritual deficiencies manifest themselves in the degeneration of one’s physical wellbeing. This is true regarding every sin except for *lashon hara*, which does not cause a breakdown of the physical but only a discoloration of the skin. When the *tzaras* lesion develops it is a confirmation from G-d that this person has failed in the area of *lashon hara*. Why should the sin of *lashon hara* manifest itself differently than other spiritual failings?

*Gemara* in Tractate *Taanis*: At the end of time the animals of the forest will put the snake on trial. They will say in an accusatory manner to the snake, “The lion tramples its prey and devours it to satisfy its hunger. The bear kills its prey and takes it back to its den to devour it. Each creature kills and devours its prey to satisfy its hunger and maintain its existence; however, you (the snake) bite your victim and slither away without necessarily consuming it. What benefit do you have from victimizing your victim?” The snake responds, “Why should I be more culpable than man who speaks *lashon hara*?” The person who speaks *lashon hara* also victimizes his victim without having any physical benefit. The snake continues by saying, “Why should I be vilified more than the human being? Why is my failing greater than his?” Why is the need to satisfy one’s desire to speak *lashon hara* any less than a need to want to satisfy his physical desire?

A human being is a composite of the physical and the spiritual. The body represents the animal. All the animalistic drives emanate from the physicality of the human being. The soul (*neshama*) is the spirituality of the human being. The *neshama* has no interest in anything

unless it has some relevance to spirituality. Therefore, when one fails spiritually and sins, it is attributed to the physicality of the person – not the spirituality. The claim the animals of the forest against the snake was that its need is not found within the animal makeup.

The animal drive has relevance only to satisfy a physical need – not some other level of satisfaction. Thus, the snake’s desire to bite its victim and slither off without having any physical benefit is an anathema. It is something that is intrinsically evil. We can understand the snake’s response to be, “I am no more culpable than the human being who speaks *lashon hara*, which does not emanate from his physicality, because it is something that has no relevance to the animal.” Since *lashon hara* does not emanate from the physical (animalistic) need, its consequences do not manifest themselves in a typically physical nature. Thus, the lesion is not something that is degenerative, but rather it is only an indicator that there is a serious spiritual deficiency.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Taanis*: *Torah* itself can be either a “Potion of Life” or a “Potion of Death”. If one studies the *Torah* for its own sake (*l’shma*) it is a life potion. On the other hand if one studies the *Torah* not for its own sake (as *Tosfos* explains with an evil or sinister intent to undermine another), then it is a death potion. *Torah* studied with the sinister intent has a commonality with *lashon hara*. Just as *lashon hara* does not emanate from the physical but rather from something inherently evil in the person, identically *Torah* studied with a sinister intent is unrelated to the physical but emanates from the same evil within the person.

If one would recognize his own failings, he would not speak negatively about another individual. The only reason one does speak *lashon hara* is because he does not appreciate and understand to what degree he himself is flawed. As a spiritual being, a person does focus on the positive aspects of another. When one speaks *lashon hara* it impacts most seriously on his spirituality as we explained because of where it emanates from – he must be sent out of all the camps. He only returns and is reinstated when he reflects and introspects regarding his failings.

## **The Consequence of Recognizing One’s Failing**

*Torah*: Regarding the person who develops a lesion resembling that of leprosy, “The *Kohen* must see him...”

*Sforno*: The contaminated or pure status of the *mitzora* can only come about through the pronouncement of the *Kohen*. The qualification of the *Kohen* is based on a verse in Malachi, "The lips of the *Kohen* are the keepers of the *daas* (wisdom/*Torah*).” After the *Kohen* pronounces the individual as *tamei* (contaminated), he instructs the leper how to introspect and reflect on his behavior because *tzaras* (leprosy) only comes about because of a spiritual failing. The *Kohen* instructs him to pray that his *teshuvah* (repentance) should be received by G-d and the *Kohen* will pray on his behalf as well.

*Talmud*: *Tzaras* is a "Mizbeach kapara – an altar of atonement." The state of leprosy sensitizes the person to appreciate his failing and make the proper corrections. When the individual is pronounced a leper, he is sent outside of all the camps. After the person is pronounced to be a leper and is sent out of all the camps, the *Torah* states, "And the person with *tzaras* in whom there is the affliction – his garments shall be torn, the hair on his head shall be unshorn, and he shall cloak himself up to his lips; he is to call out "Contaminated! Contaminated!"

*Rashi*: He must conduct himself as one who is in a state of mourning. The leper becomes a pariah and is not permitted to return to the camp until his recovery. This entire process is to cause the leper to appreciate the wrong that he has done and to allow him to atone for it.

*Chofetz Chaim* in *Shmiras HaLashon* (*Guarding One's Tongue*): When *Moshe* was engaged in dialogue with G-d at the burning bush, he had said regarding the Jewish people, "They will not listen to me. They will not believe me." G-d said to *Moshe* to throw his staff on the ground and it became a snake. Then *Moshe* was told to put his hand onto his chest area and it became leprous. The symbolism of the snake and the leprosy was to communicate to *Moshe* that firstly he assumed the posture of the snake by speaking *lashon hara* against the Jewish people. Secondly, his hand becoming leprous demonstrated that *tzaras* is the consequence of speaking *lashon hara*.

*Chofetz Chaim*: G-d said to *Moshe* to take hold of the tail of the snake, and *Moshe* did so immediately. When *Moshe* took hold of its tail, the snake reverted into a staff.

Usually taking hold of the tail of a snake leaves one more susceptible for being bitten; however, *Moshe* took hold of the tail without hesitation. *Moshe* did so because he fully appreciated and understood that he had sinned by speaking *lashon hara*, thus he wished to atone immediately. Because he fully recognized his failing he was not bitten by the snake, rather it reverted back to a staff – indicating that he had been atoned. The *Chofetz Chaim* concludes based on this that recognition and admission of one's spiritual failing is in itself a basis for atonement. We find this also to be the case regarding the brothers of *Yosef*.

*Torah*: *Yosef's* brothers realized that their difficulties in Egypt were not due to the accusations of the Viceroy of Egypt but to G-d meting out Justice for their past spiritual failing. Initially when they had sold their brother *Yosef* into slavery they were convinced that they had acted correctly. However, their difficulties in Egypt caused them to realize their misconception. This realization was their atonement.

The way one silences prosecution (from *satan*) is to acknowledge one's guilt. If the prosecutor is prosecuting and one admits his own guilt, the prosecutor has no reason to prosecute any longer. Judgment comes about because of prosecution. The Rabbis legislated that whenever (G-d forbid) tragedies come upon a Jew, he must say the blessing of, "Baruch Dayan HaEmes – Blessed is the True Judge!" One must understand that his difficulties are not because of physical matters, economic conditions, or anything other than G-d's Judgment because of his own spiritual failing. When one declares "Baruch Dayan HaEmes," he is acknowledging that Judgment of G-d is truthful and is thereby admitting his failing.

If a person truly internalized this fact he would silence prosecution against him and be atoned. This is similar to the leper introspecting and thus recognizing his failing through the instruction of the *Kohen*. The Rabbis understood the value of acknowledging this reality. Therefore, they enacted the recitation of "Baruch Dayan HaEmes." Thus, if one experiences difficulties, the sooner he acknowledges and recognizes the basis for his problem, the sooner he will recover. It is the recognition of the problem that initiates the rehabilitation.

