



Original Painting By:
YORAM RAANAN

The Vastness Of Existence IS NOT FOR MAN TO INDULGE

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Tazria-Metzorah

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Attribution to G-d Underlines The Value of One's Life & Order of Creation

CLICK TO VIEW!



The Male as a Predominant Representation of Creation

CLICK TO VIEW!



Extricating From The Earthiness Of Existence

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 result 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-Metzorah

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-Metzorah



Original Painting By:
YORAM RAANAN

The Vastness Of Existence IS NOT FOR MAN TO INDULGE

Circumcision, An Expression of Subordination to G-d

Torah: Regarding the *mitzvah* of circumcision, “On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.”

Midrash: “We see that the *Torah* does not require any special expenditure regarding the performance of the *mitzvah* of circumcision. However, come and see to what degree the Jewish people esteem the *mitzvos* and demonstrate their love for them! They incur great expenditures to fulfill the *mitzvos* and rejoice in them. G-d said, ‘Because you fulfill the *mitzvos* with joy, I will add to you an even greater level of joy.’ As it states, ‘Those who are humble to G-d will receive another level of joy.’” What is the relationship between one’s humility and the joy pertaining to the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of circumcision?

The human being is naturally inclined to rejoice over things that are of a physical nature, because his make

up is physical. For one to rejoice over something that is spiritual is contrary to the essence of the human make up. In order for one to rejoice over something spiritual one must negate his physicality. The negation of the physical for the sake of the spiritual is an outgrowth of humility. However, it is only when one humbles himself to G-d. As it states, “Those who are humble to G-d will receive another level of joy.”

Midrash: Avraham our Patriarch observed the entire *Torah* including all of the *rabbinic* enactments (such as “*eiruv tavshilin*”). If this is so, why did he not circumcise himself before the age of 99 when he was commanded by G-d?

Torah: Avraham did not merit to father Yitzchak, the future Patriarch until after he circumcised himself. It is because the act of circumcision is an indication that he had advanced and developed to a level of spiritual perfection to be worthy of carrying the sign of the holy

covenant. When *Avraham* was sufficiently spiritualized, G-d commanded him to circumcise himself. Thus, he was able to father *Yitzchak* only after his circumcision.

The obligation of circumcision to the Jew is an indication that he is a spiritual being that exists within a physical context. The act of circumcision is a negation of oneself to G-d as an expression of humility. If one's essence was physical, he would have no need to alter his physicality by removing the foreskin. G-d would have created him in a circumcised state. It is only the one who has relevance to spiritual growth and advancement that must undergo circumcision. Therefore, G-d says to the Jewish people continue to perform *mitzvos* as a demonstration of "your humility to Me, then I will add great joy to you."

King *David* in *Psalms*: "The dictates of G-d are straight and bring joy to the heart." It is the study of *Torah* that brings joy to the heart. Although the human being is endowed with physical senses, which only sense physicality, the Jew whose essence is spiritual is touched by the study of *Torah* and its dictates, which are spiritual. It is only through this level of engagement in *Torah* that brings true joy to the Jew.

Mishna in *Ethics of our Fathers*: The physical world is only an entry way into a great hall, which is the world to come. The verse is teaching us that when the *Torah* is actualized it is an expression of humility, because one is willing to negate his physical inclinations for the sake of G-d. The value of the physical to the Jew is only to facilitate the spiritual and thus be elevated as a spiritual being.

The Human Being, A Composite of the Spiritual and the Physical

Gemara: One of the consequences of speaking negatively about another (evil speech, *lashon hara*) is leprosy (*tzaraas*). Just as the individual who spoke negatively about another brought about a separation between man and his fellow and between a husband and his wife, G-d punishes this individual by causing him to be separated from the Jewish people.

Torah: If person develops a leprous lesion and is subsequently pronounced by the Priest (*Kohen*) as a "leper (*metzora*)" he then is contaminated as a leper. He must be sent out of all the camps of Israel. He remains there in a solitary state and is not permitted to have any interaction with other individuals.

Early Commentators: The leprosy (*tzaraas*) 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 as a result of a specific spiritual failing.

Rabbeinu Bachya: The word "*metzora* (leper)" is a comprised of two words "*motzi* (expresses)" and "*ra* (evil)." When one engages in negative speech against his fellow on an ongoing basis will develop such a lesion.

Sforno: The contaminated or pure status of the *metzora* 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 contaminated, he speaks to the leper about the need to introspect and reflect upon his behavior. He assists him to appreciate that his recovery can only come about through repentance and instructs the leper how to introspect and reflect on his behavior. The *Kohen* prays on his behalf so that he should be atoned and reinstated.

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 wolf 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 evil about his fellow also victimizes his victim without having any physical benefit. The snake is actually saying, "Why should I be vilified more than the human being? Why is my failing greater than his?"

A human being is a composite of the physical and the spiritual. The body which is comprised of the physical is the equivalent of the animal. All the animalistic drives that man possesses emanate from his physicality. The soul (*neshama*) is the spiritual component of the human being. The soul has no relevance to the material unless it has some relevance to spirituality. Thus, when one fails in the spiritual realm by sinning, it is attributed to the physicality of the person.

The basis of the claim of the animals of the forest against the snake is that his behavior is not found in the animal kingdom. The animalistic drive only has relevance to satisfy a physical need, which is a consequence of one's material make up. Thus, the snake's need to bite its victim and slither off without having any physical benefit is rooted in something that is deviant. Its essence is evil.

We can thus appreciate the snake's response in his own defense to be, "I am not the only one who possesses such a trait. The human being who speaks *lashon hara* about others, his actions do not emanate from his physicality, but rather from a deviate source." We can therefore understand that the leprosy of the *Torah* is not a degeneration of the physicality of the human being, because its source is not the physical, but rather, it emanates from a deviant element within him.

Chofetz Chaim: One of the negative commandments that one violates when one speaks *lashon hara* is desecrating G-d's Name (*chilul Hashem*). This is because, unlike other sins, this does not emanate from one's physicality. One has no physical benefit from speaking negatively about another. One only speaks *lashon hara* if he has no regard for G-d's Will.

It is interesting to note that the first creature to speak *lashon hara* was the snake. The *Torah* tells us that the original snake of the garden of *Eden* spoke negatively about G-d to *Chava*, the wife of *Adam*. He said, "You will not surely die (by eating of the Tree); for G-d knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like G-d, knowing good and evil."

Consequently, *Chava* ate from the Tree and caused *Adam* to eat. *Adam*, being the handiwork of G-d was totally pure; however, when he ate of the Tree of Knowledge he introduced evil into himself. The source of evil within man is a result of the *lashon hara* of the snake, who was the personification of evil. In addition, as *Chazal* tell us, "he came upon *Chava* and infused her with impurity." Therefore, the deviant characteristic of the source of *lashon hara* that that man possesses is a direct outgrowth of the snake.

Adam's Chance to be Pardoned

Chazal: The affliction of leprosy (*tzaraas*) that is mentioned in the *Torah* is a sign that indicates that one possesses a spiritual deficiency due to a certain type of

behavior. For example, if one speaks negatively about his fellow (*lashon hara*) or is extremely arrogant and haughty or is miserly and not willing to share his blessings with others, he will contract leprosy at some level.

Midrash: G-d does not want to condemn any of His Creations. This is based on the verse, 'G-d does not want evil to come upon anyone.' He is not a G-d that seeks out evil.

Yechezkel: 'G-d says, 'I do not want the evil one to be liable for death, but rather, I want him to repent and live.' What does G-d want? He wants to vindicate His Creation... When G-d created *Adam*, he placed him in the Garden of *Eden* and commanded him, 'From this you shall eat, but from that (the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil) you shall not eat. For on the day that you will eat from it, you shall surely die.'

Adam failed and ate of the fruit of the Tree. Consequently, G-d brought a decree upon him. When *Shabbos* came, G-d absolved *Adam*. G-d entered into a conversation with him to arouse him to repent. As it states, "*Hashem* G-d called out to the man and said, 'Where are you?'" It is understood that G-d knew *Adam*'s location. He was asking 'Adam where are you regarding your state of being?'

G-d was asking *Adam* to reflect upon what he had done so that he could repent. The *Torah* uses the appellation of G-d '*Hashem* (YKVK)' when He called out to *Adam* to indicate that it was the Attribute of Mercy that was in effect. The *Torah* first uses the appellation "*Hashem*" and then the appellation of "*Elokeem*" which connotes the Attribute of Justice.

Initially, G-d wanted to be Merciful with *Adam* so that he should repent and be vindicated. When he did not repent, G-d invoked His Attribute of Justice. G-d entered into a conversation with *Adam* for him to repent saying, 'Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree...?' *Adam*, however, did not repent, and G-d drove him out of the Garden of *Eden*. Had *Adam* repented, he would not have been driven out. From where do we know that G-d alluded to *Adam* to repent?

Rav Achinaei in the name of Reb Levy: "G-d said, 'By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until you return to the ground...' G-d used the word 'return' to allude to repentance. Returning is repenting. As it states, 'Return Israel to *Hashem* your G-d because you have sinned...'"

Chazal: Adam was the handiwork of G-d whose clarity was so absolute that us he could see from one end of the world to the other. After failing to such a degree in the Garden of Eden and being spoken to by G-d Himself about repentance, why did Adam not repent?

Gemara in Tractate Eruvin: After Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden he repented and fasted for a period of 130 years. Why did he not repent in the Garden of Eden, thus allowing himself to be reinstated and not expelled? Repentance is a full spiritual reinstatement. When one repents, one is restored to his original spiritual state (and beyond) before he sinned.

When Adam sinned, he immediately experienced the effect of his transgression. As the *Torah* tells us, he realized that he was naked, indicating that he was no longer the same person that he was before he sinned. The clarity that he had that allowed him to see from one end of the world to the other was diminished.

Prior to the sin, Adam's radiance was a semblance of the radiance of G-d. After the sin, he no longer radiated to such a degree. Adam, understanding the catastrophic effects of his actions, believed that it was not possible to be rehabilitated and restored to his original level. He had believed that after causing such spiritual destruction and level of impurity, it was not possible to regain his original self. He thus did not repent because he believed that he was beyond hope. Although G-d alluded to him to repent, he felt that it would have no value. It was only after Adam was expelled from the Garden that he chose to repent. However, he could no longer return to his original state.

Reb Yisroel Salanter citing a verse in *Yechezkel*: The prophet had urged the Jewish people at the time of the Temple to repent to prevent its destruction. They responded by saying, 'We are in such a spiritually decrepit state that repentance has no relevance to us.'

Reb Yisroel Salanter: "If in our time the Jew is aroused to repent by hearing the first sound of the shofar, how could the Jewish people who lived at the time of the Temple not be moved to repent by hearing the words of the prophet? It is not that they were less spiritual than we are, but rather the opposite. It was because they understood and appreciated the spiritual devastation that results from sin.

"However, we who cannot fathom the destructiveness of sin, only understand transgression within the

context of doing the wrong thing. It is therefore easier for us to repent and commit ourselves to no longer do the wrong in the future." If one would be able to appreciate the negative effect of sin, one would truly be terrified by its level of destructiveness. Repentance is a gift that was given by G-d to the Jewish people. It is the equivalent of a spiritual resurrection within the Jew, to be able to be fully restored to his original level of spirituality and beyond.

The Torah and the Jewish People, a Necessity for Existence

Midrash citing a verse from *Psalms*: "'He does not associate Himself with evil (*rah*)...' What is the meaning of this? G-d does not allow His Name to be associated with anything evil/tragic. Everything with which He associates His Name is good with the exception of two instances, which were tragic.

"Daniel: Regarding the exile and destruction of the First Temple, 'G-d is diligent and vigilant regarding the tragedy. He expedited the tragedy (*rah*) (upon us) because *Hashem* our G-d is righteous.' How is this so? G-d brought righteousness upon the Jewish people. He brought about the exile of *Yechoniah* (King of *Yehudah*) before the exile of *Tzidkiyahu* (King of *Yehudah*). G-d performed a Kindness by hastening the exile of the greatest *Torah* sages from Israel years earlier to go to Babylon where they established *Torah* citadels to secure the spiritual future of the Jewish people. Had the *Torah* sages not gone to Babylon before the ultimate exile and destruction of the Temple, the *Torah* would have been forgotten."

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: When Nebuchadnezzar (Babylonian Emperor) exiled the Jewish people from the Land of Israel he did so in stages. One of the early exiles was that of *Yechoniah*. He was exiled to Babylon along with a group of people who are referred to as the "*chorish* and *masgeir* – when they spoke everyone was the equivalent of a deaf mute." These individuals were the most advanced *Torah* Sages of that generation. When they would speak, everyone would remain mute and when they gave a definitive ruling, no one would question their decision.

When Nebuchadnezzar eventually destroyed the Temple and exiled *Tzidkiyahu* to Babylon with the remainder of the Jewish people, the community

had already been exposed to the teachings of the exceptional *Torah* Sages who had preceded them, thus guaranteeing *Torah* never to be forgotten until the end of time. Had this group of *Torah* sages not preceded the Jewish people to Babylon, *Torah* who have been forgotten from the Jewish people. Although at the time the upheaval and displacement of the first group was tragic and painful, G-d performed the greatest kindness for the Jewish people. He therefore associated His Name with this event.

The other instance in which G-d associated His Name with something that was tragic is discussed in the *Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos*. At the time of the destruction of the First Temple, G-d had instructed the Angel of Death to paint the letter “*tuf*” in red on the foreheads of all of the evil (*rashaim*) so that they should be marked for death.

However, regarding the devoutly righteous, G-d instructed the Angel of Death to paint the letter “*tuf*” in black to indicate that they should be spared. The Attribute of Justice complained that the righteous also deserve to perish and thus should be marked with the letter “*tuf*” in red for death, because they did not intercede and protest the evil behavior of the sinners. They remained silent. Thus, they also deserved to die.

G-d responded to the Attribute of Justice that even if the *tzaddikim* would have protested, their admonishments would not have been heeded. The Attribute of Justice responded, “Although it is true what You say, the *tzaddikim* of that generation were not aware that their rebuke would have been ignored and fallen on deaf ears. Since they did not protest, the *tzaddikim* also deserve to die.” G-d concurred, and decreed that the righteous should die together with the evil. What is the value of G-d associating His Name with these two particular tragedies?

Midrash: “Because the righteous perished along with the evil, G-d’s Wrath was diffused from Jerusalem. Had these few righteous people not perished, G-d would have destroyed the entire Jewish people.” Although the exiles and the death of the righteous are the two exceptions in which G-d associates His Name with tragedy, they were truly in the best interest of the Jewish people and great good resulted from each instance.

G-d’s Presence in this existence is only due to the Jewish people. If the Jewish people were to be destroyed, G-d would no longer be associated with

existence. Therefore, regardless of the how tragic and painful these events may have been, because they guaranteed the existence of the Jewish people and the *Torah*, they allowed G-d to maintain His relationship with existence. G-d thus associated His Name with them. The *Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos* tells us, “All that G-d does is only for the good.” These two events are unrelated to this *Gemara*.

The Necessity for Joy

Torah: At the time of the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai, “Moshe, Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ascended. They saw the G-d of Israel... they gazed at G-d, yet they ate and drank.”

Rashi citing *Chazal*: They had gazed upon the Divine Presence (*Shechina*) in an inappropriate manner and thus were liable for death. However, since G-d did not want to interfere with the joy of the receiving of the *Torah*, He postponed their death (*Nadav* and *Avihu*) until the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.

Regarding the seventy elders of Israel who were also liable for death, G-d caused them to die along with the some of the Jewish people who began to complain in the desert that they did not have meat. G-d’s Wrath flared up against them and His fire consumed the edge of the camp. Thus, G-d postponed the deaths of *Nadav*, *Avihu*, and the seventy elders so as not to interfere with the joy of the receiving of the *Torah*.

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: The level of joy that G-d had at the time of the inauguration of the *Mishkan* was the equivalent of the joy that He had at the time of Creation. The inauguration of the *Mishkan* was a confirmation for the Jewish people that they had been forgiven for the sin of the golden calf. The experience was one of the most momentous occasions in Jewish history. Why was G-d not concerned that the death of *Nadav* and *Avihu* would detract from this joyous event? Why was He only concerned with disrupting the joy at the time of the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai?

According to Jewish Law, one is not permitted to engage in *Torah* study while he is in a state of mourning because the innate joy in studying *Torah* will detract from one’s need to feel his grief during the mourning period. This is based on a verse from Psalms which states, “The dictates of G-d are straight and bring joy to the heart.” Therefore, a mourner is not permitted to

study *Torah* unless it relates specifically to mourning. We see from this that joy is synonymous with *Torah*.

As a result of the Sinai event, the Jewish people had the capacity to appreciate G-d. This revelation impacted them and inculcated within their souls a depth of spirituality that was unique. If the Jewish people had not experienced the joy of the giving of *Torah*, their experience would have been deficient. Thus, undermining the effectiveness of the event. Consequently the Jewish people's capacity for spirituality would have been limited. It was experiencing the Sinai event with joy that gave them the breadth and depth of understanding that would enable them to process all future events despite their circumstance.

Although the inauguration of the *Mishkan* was marred with the death of *Nadav* and *Avihu*, the Jewish people were nevertheless able to appreciate the lesson that was meant to be learned from that tragedy because they received the *Torah* with the sufficient level of joy. The inauguration of the *Mishkan* was a confirmation that the Jewish people had been forgiven for the sin of the golden calf. It was not similar to Sinai which

established the spirituality of the Jewish people until the end of time. Thus if the joy were interrupted at the inauguration of the *Mishkan* it would not have negative ramifications upon the Jewish people. In fact, the *Torah* tells us that it was an obligation for the Jewish people to mourn and experience the loss of the sins of *Aaron* at the time of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*.

Once the Jewish people were established as a holy and priestly people at Sinai, the death of *Aaron's* children did not interfere with their understanding of the innate value of that misfortune. The death of *Nadav* and *Avihu* is classified by the *Torah* as a Sanctification of G-d's Name (*Kiddush Hashem*). As *Moshe* had said to *Aaron* his brother, "It is through those who are holiest I (G-d) am sanctified." The Jew is able to weather many storms of life and to put them into perspective because of what was instilled in them at Sinai. Just as the Holy Patriarchs ensured that there should be no impurity in the pedigree of the Jewish people, which would detract from their spiritual potential, so too did G-d not allow the joy of Sinai to be diminished for any reason in order to establish the spirituality of the Jewish people for eternity.



Yad Avraham Institute