

When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be contaminated for a period of seven days. (12:2)

The laws regarding the human being are consistent with those dealing with all other creatures. *Rashi* quotes the *Midrash* that notes that the creation of man mirrored the creation of animals and birds. In connection with this, the *Midrash* cites the pasuk in *Tehillim* (139:5), "*Achor vokedem tzartani*," "*Behind and before You have fortified me.*" This pasuk can be read, "You have formed me," employing the root word "*yatzar*", creation, rather than "*tzar*" which means to fortify. The latter term is a reference to human creation, which took place both before and after that of other creatures. Man's *neshamah* predated Creation, whereas Hashem created his body on the sixth day. The laws that address man's spirit take precedence over the laws concerning animals which, in turn, precede the laws that address man's physical being. Man's laws bracket the works of Creation, alluding to an important lesson. Man's level of morality could distinguish him so that he stands above all the other creations. He can dominate the entire world from his exalted pedestal. He can also slip and fall backward. Indeed, a lowly gnat is considered more important than a man who has fallen - backwards.

Let us attempt to grasp the words of *Chazal*. Is a gnat - or any creature for that matter - more important than man, even when man is at the nadir of depravity? Man is the crown of Creation! The world was created for him. Can a lowly insect have more distinction than a human being? *Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi, Shlita*, explains that Hashem's value system is "somewhat" different than ours. Hashem views the fulfillment of one's purpose as the yardstick for measuring success. Thus, even if the difference between two creatures is vast, it is insignificant. The determining factor for achievement in life is the fruition of one's objective. The gnat has a purpose - to exist on this world - not to do anything - just merely to exist. That is its purpose - and it has achieved its objective in life. The human being who does not maintain a moral life, who does not live by a code of justice and decency; the Jew who does not fulfill his G-d-given purpose, is not as good as the gnat. The gnat made it - it has fulfilled its aim in life - man did not. We should view ourselves through the prism of the *Torah*, a perspective that looks at where we are in the context of where we should be.