

When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male. (12:2)

The *Midrash* comments concerning this *pasuk*. *Chazal* cite the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 139:5, "hb,rmh oseu rujt" "*Back and front, You fashioned me.*" *Resh Lakish* says "back and front" refers to the first day of Creation. If a person maintains his commitment to *Torah* and *mitzvos*, he is told, "You came before the entire work of Creation." If, in contrast, he lives a life alienated from *Torah*, he is told, "Even a gnat preceded you; even an earthworm preceded you." While man was created chronologically last, he is first in importance--if he has earned this honor. If, however, he falls from his position, if he does not live up to his charge, the chronological order of his creation has greater significance.

We must endeavor to understand the underlying meaning of *Chazal's* statement. Does it make sense to suggest that a lowly worm has greater significance than a human being--even one who has erred by alienating himself from the traditions of his people? **Horav Baruch Mordechai Ezechai, Shlita**, offers a profound explanation of *Chazal's* words. Hashem created every creation with a purpose. Ostensibly, the more significant the creation, the more compelling and demanding is its purpose. Man serves as the crown of Creation, the epitome of Hashem's handiwork. His goal in life is commensurate with his ability and opportunity. Hashem created the earthworm for a reason, obviously one which is distinct from the purpose of a human being. The earthworm, however has one advantage over a human--it succeeds in attaining its goal on this world, while the person who did not "make it," falls short of his potential. The lowly earthworm has attained its goal, while man, the crown of Creation, the purpose of all Creation, did not realize his potential.

How compelling is this idea! Success is measured by what a person could and should achieve--not by what an individual thinks he has achieved. We are placed on this world by design. The *raison d'etre* of our lives is to serve Hashem. Everything that we do exclusive of that objective has little significance in the scheme of the world. It is unfortunate when an individual trades his place as representative of the crown of Creation for an achievement level lower than the potential of an earthworm.