

Parshas Tazria Metzora

This week's Parsheos are Tazria Metzora, which talk about bodily purity, which follows the Parsha of Kashrus (in Parshas Shemini), as Rashi explains, so that if one doesn't keep the laws of purity, Hashem can say that animals preceded you in creation. The purpose of discussing purity is that, as a Jew with a holy Neshama, some laws govern how we must take care of our bodies. So, it's not enough what we put into it being of a specific and holy standard (Kosher), it is also our actions of how we use the body. It begins with an 8-day-old baby boy receiving a bris, and the mother having to go through a purity process as she emerges from post-natal status.

Further to this idea, it's not enough that we have restrictions on what we eat, and what we eat, we have explicit permission to eat it (only if it is the correct category of animal, etc.). Rabbi Yitzchak from Midrash Rabba says that man and animal are equal because a boy becomes "Jewish" after 8 days, and an animal can be used for sacrifice after 8 days. The equality is that the metaphor of personal sacrifice and a physical korban are equated in that regard. But to build on this point, just because there is a point of equalization (8 days for bris and korban eligibility), it also differentiates us from being animal, the fact that we bind our bodies to Hashem at 8 days, and the fact that we must eat specific food, and the

fact that a women must go through a purification process, means that we are not animals, we rise above it.

Our entire purpose on earth is to build an abode for Hashem; this process means that it's not on our own volition to complete that task, per se. We must follow the torah and perform its Mitzvos to accomplish this. Just as the Torah is the blueprint that builds the world, Torah is found in everything, which means that through learning Torah and doing Mitzvos, we enlighten the world and sustain the world (adapted from the Mamer of the Freidieker Rebbe "V'Chol Banayich Limuday Hashem"). The Rebbe explains further that our service in this regard begins at 8 days old, when there is no recognition of the Mitzvah, because inherently we do the deeds of Hashem, and learn Torah and do Mitzvos even without reason. Meaning built into our existence is the core connection of service to Hashem, which means all our actions and Torah learning foster the continued sustenance of the world, and this process begins without question at 8 days. This process marks us as Jews and humans, which is different from all other species and animals, which we can only use under specific circumstances (kosher) for particular purposes (ideally mitzvos and sustenance). In this way we make the world a better place and one step closer to building the abode down here, which will culminate at the coming

of Mashiach, which should happen
speedily in our days.

Good Shabbos