

KOL TODA



Gateways to Gratitude: Giving Thanks to Hashem

The Supreme Mitzvah

The Ramban writes (Parashas Bo 13,16): "The purpose of all the mitzvot is to bring us to strengthen our belief in Hashem and to feel gratitude to Him for having created us." The exceptional significance of gratitude as the ultimate objective of mitzvot is expressed also in the brachah we say before Kriat Shema in the morning – "... and You brought us close to Your Great Name... in order to thank You ..."

This arouses a major question. How come such a fundamental mitzvah, that is the purpose of all the mitzvot, does not appear explicitly in the Torah. We don't find anywhere in the Torah a mitzvah to thank Hashem for all His kindnesses. The only mitzvah of gratitude in the Torah is Birchat Hamazon (the blessing said after a meal)?

A similar question arises from the words of the Orchos Zaddikim: "One who performs a mitzvah with joy attains a merit a thousand-fold more than one to whom the mitzvot are a burden." Here too, the same question arises: if this is such a significant

mitzvah, why does it not appear overtly in the Torah? This question is even more problematic with regard to the description of the Torah of the 98 severe travails in Parashas Ki Tavo that come as a result of performing the mitzvot with lack of simchah. How can such terrible troubles come for something we were never instructed to do?

The sefer Sha'arei Ahavah answers these questions: The Torah does indeed obligate us to arouse within our heart feelings of gratitude to Hashem. We are required by the Torah to develop within our heart love of Hashem, and one of the primary ways of achieving this is to appreciate all His kindnesses.

This mitzvah of Ahavas Hashem is so fundamental that we are obligated to recite it morning and evening in the Shema, write it on our doorposts and in our tefillin. The purpose of these mitzvot is clear: to be reminded constantly to focus on arousing feelings of love of Hashem.

Someone who loves Hashem will do His Will with joy as the Mesilas

How can a Jew allow a day to go by without fulfilling the vital mitzvah of loving Hashem?



Art: Yehoshua Wiseman - 054-8441131

Yesharim writes: "A tributary of the mitzvah of love of Hashem is serving Him with joy... for the more a person comes closer to knowing Hashem - i.e. appreciating His goodness and Love - the more he becomes elated and his heart rejoices within him."

The Chofetz Chaim, in Shemiras Halashon expresses his deeply felt concern: "How can a Jew allow

a day to go by without fulfilling the vital mitzvah of loving Hashem?" He therefore suggests that every Jew designate a time each day to contemplate Hashem's kindnesses and love for him. One of the most effective ways to cultivate love of Hashem is to set aside time for expressing gratitude to Him, as the Sforno writes in his introduction to Tehilim: "By giving thanks to Hashem and acknowledging his kindness and goodness, a person will acquire the love of Hashem."

It now becomes clear why thanking Hashem brings profuse blessings of success both spiritual and material. The Torah writes in Parashas Ki Tavo that all curses come where there is lack of love for Hashem, and in Parshas Nitzavim writes that all blessings come on someone who loves Hashem. It is thus understood that when we work on arousing in ourselves feelings of love of Hashem through thankfulness, we merit opening the heavenly gates of blessing.

In accordance with this insight, it is most beneficial and commendable before expressing

gratitude to Hashem to express one's intention to fulfill the mitzvah of the Torah of loving Hashem. This introduction will arouse one to not only thank Hashem verbally but to be aware of Hashem's love as it manifests itself in the kindness, filling the person's heart with enthusiastic love, joy and thankfulness to Hashem.

Thanking Hashem is the gateway to love of Hashem, which has many levels - thus gratitude to Hashem also has many levels. Young children can practice expressing their gratitude to Hashem as well as sages and learned Talmidei Chachomim. The constant expression of gratitude to Hashem, raises a person from one level to the next. May we all merit filling our hearts to total capacity with the radiance of gratitude, joy and love of Hashem.

(Practical guidance and inspiration on gratitude and Ahavas Hashem can be found in the Hebrew publication Sha'arei Hodayah that is available in all Leolam Odeka branches, and in the sefer Sha'arei Ahavah.)



A Word of Gratitude

"Odcha Hashem ki anitani - I thank You Hashem for having inflicted me, vat'hi li li'shuah - and this itself brings about salvation" (Tehillim 118,21). Praising Hashem even in times of trouble out of recognition that it is all designed by Hashem for our best, turns the attribute of judgment into mercy and brings speedy salvation (Be'er Mayim Chayim, Bereshit 46:1)

Zaddikim Thank Hashem

Rabbi Shmuel Frankel of Darag once traveled to Trieste for business but was totally unsuccessful. He was very discouraged and decided to make his way home. Just then, he met a man looking extremely fatigued and despondent. He asked him what his problem was, and the man described his plight: he was a dealer in arba minim, but business was bad and he had eaten nothing in the past three days.

Rabbi Shmuel took the man to

a nearby tavern and ordered a wholesome nutritious meal for him. He sat and ate with him, till he started looking better.

In the middle of the meal, the man got up and began to dance and sing. He then went back and ate a little more, and once again got up to dance. He explained to Rabbi Shmuel: "Hashem created the world, and allocates each person's livelihood. Now, I am a seasoned businessman. If the world would go according

to the natural way of things, I should never lack bread to eat. So, if it happened that I didn't have money for food for three days, this is not an act of nature but an act of direct Heavenly intervention. Seeing that Hashem is so closely and intimately watching over me, makes me feel exhilarated and grateful."

Rabbi Shmuel used to say that all his time, effort and money in traveling to Trieste was worthwhile just to learn this amazing lesson.

TELEPHONE LINE "KOL TODA"

Daily inspiration, shiurim, personal stories of yeshuos, tefilla & song.

FOR MEN

In Hebrew & English
03-6171190

FOR WOMEN

In Hebrew, English, Yiddish & French
03-6171180



DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?

Take upon yourself at least 1 minute per day to thank Hashem' & give in a name for tefilla.

Call for details: 02-5808137



Did you get chizuk from the monthly bulletin?

Please consider making a donation to Kol Toda for ilui neshama, as a zechus for yeshua or as a way of thanking Hashem for His innumerable

contributions via the website

Eretz Yisrael
052-7108384
02-5808137

America
011-97225808137
011-972527108384

<https://kehilot.info/donate/8856>