

## He blessed Yosef and he said,..."O G-d who shepherds me from my inception until this day." (48:15)

*Targum Unkeles* understands "*ha'roeh osi*," "Who shepherds me", as "Who sustains me." Interestingly, *Yaakov Avinu* finds no other time suitable to offer his gratitude to the Almighty for sustaining him and providing for his basic material needs. He refers to the G-d before whom his ancestors walked, whose angel redeemed him from all evil, and adds - "Who has sustained me." Why did *Yaakov* find it necessary to supplement his praise of Hashem with the more "basic and simple" praise of sustenance?

*Horav Gershon Leibman, Shlita, Rosh Hayeshiva* of Bais Yosef in France, extends this question. We thank Hashem for our daily bread when we recite *Birkas Hamazon*. Other than that, we do not offer gratitude for *mazon* or *parnassah*, sustenance and our daily livelihood, during our daily *tefillas*. Even on *Rosh Hashanah*, at a time when we turn to Hashem to sustain us during the coming year, our prayers revolve around Hashem's *kedushah*, sanctity, His eminence, our awe of Him; we ask that He dignify us before the nations of the world and that the righteous experience joy and happiness. Yet, we do not ask for sustenance or for any material blessings. Why then did *Yaakov* find this moment to be appropriate for thanking Hashem for sustaining him? *Horav Simchah Zissel, zl, M'Kelm*, was wont to say, "*Baruch Hashem*, I have sufficient food for today." In fact, food is something about which people with class rarely talk. Yet, *Yaakov Avinu* makes a point to mention it. Why?

The answer is simple, according to *Horav Leibman*. We think that we are above dwelling upon the concept of food and everyday mundane necessities. We are "flying in the Heavens," attempting to develop our spiritual level, to attain a closer "relationship" with the Almighty. All the while, we ignore the basics - the source of everything. We perceive only that which is immediately in front of us. The infant sees and relies on his mother for his sustenance. As the child matures, his father takes over the "position" of provider. When he becomes an adult, he relies upon himself. He sees that which is before him - he never perceives the real source of his sustenance - Hashem.

Too many partitions separate us from Hashem - or so we think. *Horav Yisrael Yaakov Lubshenski, zl*, would always wonder: Why it is that when something goes wrong, we never complain directly to Hashem? We never get "angry" at Him. Instead, we criticize our friends or associates, anyone upon whom we can place blame? Never do we focus on the real source of our problem - Hashem. The reason has been mentioned before. We do not focus on the source; we do not look for the true origin, only for the immediate reason which is before us. We do not search in the distance for Hashem, because regrettably we do not acknowledge His presence in our midst at all times.

For *Yaakov Avinu* there is no *mechitzah*, partition, between him and the Creator. Nothing stands between him and his understanding of Hashem's Providence throughout every aspect of his life - not

even what may seem to be "natural" cause and effect. His *parnassah*, livelihood, is derived directly from Hashem through *Hashgachah Pratis*, Divine Providence. It is no different than one who receives a check in the mail from his parents: Will he for one moment consider that this check is a gift from the mailman? No! The mailman is only an agent carrying out his "mission." Yaakov *Avinu* clearly recognized the source of his sustenance. Therefore, he was able to offer gratitude in turn. It would also serve us well to look beyond the "mailman" and reflect upon the origin of the "check."