

If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering, he shall offer with the feast wafers....and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil. With loaves of leavened bread he shall bring his offering. (7:12, 13)

The *Korban Todah* was unique in that it consisted of forty loaves, some of which were *chometz* and some of which were *matzoh*. This *korban*, which represents man's thanksgiving to Hashem, was different than the usual *Korban Shelamim*, peace-offering. The *Korban Shelamim* was eaten for two days and one night. In contrast, the *Korban Todah* was eaten only for one day and one night. The **Netziv** comments on the quantity of loaves, especially in light of the fact that the amount of time allotted for eating the loaves is less than usual. He says that the individual who has survived a life-threatening crisis, who is now offering his heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty, should do so with as much publicity as possible. By being required to eat within such a limited period of time, he is compelled to invite many people to join him in his moment of thanksgiving. Thus people will gather to sanctify Hashem's Name and relate His beneficence.

The ability to express gratitude, especially to Hashem, is probably the most significant character trait one can possess. One who neither acknowledges nor demonstrates his gratitude towards others will not display gratitude to Hashem. We must realize that whatever we possess is the direct result of Hashem's favor. *Hakoras ha'tov*, appreciation, however goes further. **Rav Akiva Eiger, z"l**, renders a novel exposition of the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* 50:23, "He who offers confession, honors Me; and one who orders (his) way, I will show him the salvation of G-d." This *pasuk* refers to an individual who gives thanks to Hashem, who offers a *Korban Todah* for the favors he has received, and who makes order in his *derech ha'chaim*, way of life. One who does not live haphazardly, but analyzes his life and corrects his ways will receive Hashem's salvation. Rav Akiva Eiger interpreted this *pasuk* to be a lesson in gratitude. One who offers gratitude to Hashem prepares the way for future favors. One who appreciates and demonstrates his gratitude, merits to receive more and more. The *zechus* of *hakoras ha'tov* serves as the catalyst for increased *tov*!

Horav Shmuel Truvitz, Shlita, supplements this idea with various proofs from *Chazal*. He cites *Rashi* on the *pasuk* in *Bereishis* 2:5, "Now the tree of the field was not yet on the earth, and the herb of the field had not yet sprouted, for Hashem, G-d, had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to work the soil." Hashem did not send rain, since no one was present to recognize and appreciate the gift of rain. When Adam was created, he recognized the absolute value of rain to the world. He prayed to Hashem, and it rained. Hashem issued His favor because Adam was there to accept it.

We may add that there was no one who would recognize its source--Hashem. We receive favors. In fact, our entire life is one great favor. Unfortunately, we frequently fail to thank the One responsible for it all--Hashem. Perhaps, if we would realize to Whom we should pray, our

entreaties would be answered much more quickly.

Horav Truvitz compares this to a loving father who is quite wealthy, who wants to bequeath a great fortune to his only son. He only desires one thing in return--that his son display some gratitude and appreciate what his father gives to him. As soon as the son does this, there is no limit to the gifts the father will shower upon him. He just wants to be appreciated. Is that too much to ask?

Every morning, upon arising, we begin our day by thanking Hashem for restoring our soul. "*Modeh ani lefanecha*" is the first prayer that every young child learns as he begins his educational experience. The *halachah* states that this prayer is said promptly upon awakening, even before one has washed his hands. No other prayer is permitted to be said until a person is in a state of cleanliness. What makes this prayer so unique? **Horav Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, z"l**, infers from here that gratitude is of the greatest significance. The sense of gratitude is so critical that *Chazal* have dispensed with the usual criteria that one must be clean before praying. Moreover, we also note that an individual is always obligated to express gratitude for the favors he has received, irrespective of his spiritual deficiencies. *Hakoras hatov* is one of the rudimentary characteristics of human decency. One who does not express gratitude is not a *mensch*. It is as simple as that.