

## "If he offers it by reason of gratitude." (7:12)

One of the central themes in Judaism is the concept of thanksgiving. Indeed, we are called "*Yehudim*," a name derived from the name Yehudah. Leah gave Yehudah that name because it reflected her profound appreciation to Hashem for granting her this child. She felt she now had more than she deserved. The **Gerer Rebbe, zl**, comments that every "*Yehudi*" should feel that whatever he receives from Hashem is more than he actually deserves.

Our first words when we arise in the morning are, "*Modeh Ani Le'fanecha*," "I thank you Hashem." These opening words should set the tone for our daily relationship with Hashem. As one *gadol* once said, "We would do well to reflect upon the "*Ani*," "I," and the "*Le'fanecha*," "You (Hashem)." When we realize who we really are and before Whom we stand, our sense of appreciation would be greatly enhanced.

As a result of their ego, many people have a serious problem expressing gratitude. This inadequacy is a sickness. As a result of one's vanity he either does not acknowledge Hashem as His Benefactor, or he thinks that he is entitled to Hashem's gift. This is not the way a Jew should act. We should seek the good in everything that happens to us and acknowledge it. By constantly thanking Hashem, we will come to realize our dependence upon Him.

The *Korban Todah* was the only *korban* that was eaten for only one day. The **Sfas Emes** states that every day brings with it new goodness and favor from Hashem. Consequently, one owes new gratitude to Hashem for His constant beneficence every day. We may add that the effect of the kindness received continues on and on. Thus, it renews itself daily. We fail to appreciate the favors rendered to us when we were younger. Alternatively, we think that by saying "thank you" once, or giving the standard gift, that we have accomplished our "pay back." If we have thrived as a result of another's kindness, then our entire life has virtually changed.

Everyday is, therefore, a new gift. Regrettably, we tend to forget all those from whom we have benefitted when we were younger. The *rebbe*/teacher who helped us when we were starting out, the older *bachur* in the *yeshivah*, the counselor in camp, etc. Our memory concerning those who have catalyzed our positive growth is prone to lapses. We have a propensity to have short-lived memories when it comes to acknowledging a favor. This attitude goes against the very fiber of Judaism. We can develop into constructive Jews only by overcoming this self-centered approach and learning to acknowledge others' contribution to our personal growth.