

But Hashem did not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see, or ears to hear until this day. (29:3)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* tells the people that only now, after forty years of miraculous sojourn in the wilderness, with danger at every turn, were the people finally able to acknowledge the all-encompassing gratitude they owed Hashem. It takes common sense, wisdom and insight to appreciate fully the debt of gratitude we owe those who have helped us in our achievements. Sadly, many of us refuse to engage our common sense, either because it then behooves us to show our gratitude to others – which is difficult for some – or because a festering bitterness makes us angry and resentful of anything others might do for us.

Rashi explains the word *daas*, knowledge, as the ability to recognize the kindness of Hashem. In the *Talmud Sanhedrin* 92a, *Chazal* state, “One who gives his bread to someone who has no *daas* (which in this case means common sense, the ability to discern) he will receive *yissurim*, pain and affliction.” We wonder what offense he committed by being nice to a person who lacks wisdom. Does he deserve such punishment as pain and affliction – just for being nice to the fellow who does not appreciate his act of kindness?

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, explains that the punishment does not emanate from Hashem; rather, when one helps someone who is incapable of appreciating his kindness he ultimately will end up suffering from the subject of his beneficence. Someone who lacks appreciation invariably belittles the kindness that he has received. He will attempt to discredit his benefactor by finding something deficient about his act of kindness. In the end, he will complain about him and even scorn him. All this is due to the fact that a person who lacks *daas* is dangerous.

It is all part of a pattern of bitterness. *Klal Yisrael* complained about the *manna*: it was too light; its texture troubled them. They did not realize that kings eat light food, because they can afford to eat refined food. Hashem was doing the Jewish People a favor. Not only did they not appreciate the favor, but they complained and scorned Hashem.

When Adam ate of the *Eitz HaDaas*, Tree of Knowledge, whom did he blame? “The woman whom You gave me.” Hashem sought to help Adam, so that he would not be alone; He created an *eizer k'negdo*, a helpmate opposite him. As soon as Adam erred, he immediately blamed Hashem for giving him Chavah: “Hashem, it is because of You that I sinned. Had You not granted me this woman, I would not be in this predicament.” Someone who is not *makir tovah*, able to acknowledge gratitude, can turn on his benefactors.

The *meraglim*, spies, were no different. They observed many funerals taking place wherever they went in *Eretz Yisrael*. Rather than attributing this strange occurrence to Hashem providing miracles for them, they slandered the Land.

Bitter people are angry and resentful, occupying themselves with finding and dwelling on ways in which they have been wronged and how life is not fair. These people are not enjoyable to be around, because they spoil everyone's mood. They negatively stereotype others and see only what their warped minds perceive. They enjoy their bitterness, because their life is probably not the way they want it to be. They become martyrs to their misery, all the while taking it out on anyone who has the misfortune to cross their paths.

Hakoras hatov, gratitude, means acknowledging the good one has performed for the benefit of another person. To acknowledge good demands that one concede that he has benefited from someone else and that life is not as bad as he has painted it to be. In order to change this pervasive attitude, which eats away at a person until he has lost every friend and destroyed every relationship that he has ever had, one must sort out his issues and focus on the root of his bitterness. It could be his job, lack of success, family issues, finances, etc. One's mind naturally gravitates towards other negative thoughts. By sorting out one's issues and getting his life where he wants it to be, he will be less troubled by life's injustices. We must remember that a person who is bitter towards other people cannot be far from expressing his negativity towards Hashem.