

If he shall offer it for a Thanksgiving-offering. (7:12)

Chazal list four instances in which a person should bring a *Korban Todah*: when he has traveled overseas; when he has traveled through the desert; when he has been released from prison; when he has been cured of an illness. **Rabbeinu Bachya** supplements this, saying that all instances of joy – such as *simchas chassan v'kallah*, wedding – are reason for bringing a *Korban Todah*. The *Korban Todah* is comprised of forty loaves, thirty of which are *matzoh* and ten which are *chametz*. All this must be eaten in the span of a night and a day. For instance, if one brought the *korban* today at eleven o'clock in the morning, it must all be consumed by midnight of that day. The **Netziv** explains the rationale for this restricted eating. When a person has much to eat and so very little time, he is compelled to invite his family and friends to join him. This will increase their appreciation of Hashem's bestowal of His favor on man, thereby increasing *kavod Shomayim*, the glory of Heaven.

Likutei Basar Likutei adds that, in merit of one's recognition of Hashem's miracles, he will merit to continue seeing *nissim*, miracles, in his life. This is alluded to by the *pasuk*, *V'zos Toras HaShelamim asher yakriv*: What is the reward for one who brings *Shalmei Todah*, Thanksgiving offerings? *Asher yakriv* – he will in the future continue to bring offerings. The greatest reward for the performance of a *mitzvah* is the opportunity to continue performing other *mitzvos*.

We no longer have the opportunity to pay gratitude to Hashem via the vehicle of *korbanos*. *U'neshalaham parim sefaseinu*, "Our lips take the place of actual *korbanos*." The power of prayer is awesome; prayer takes the place of a *korban*. An example is when we recite daily from *Sefer Tehillim* (100:1), *Mizmor l'sodah, hariu l'Hashem kol ha'aretz*, "A song of thanksgiving; call out to Hashem, everyone on earth." In accordance with its name, this psalm was sung by the *Leviim* as an accompaniment to a *Korban Todah*. Since this *mizmor* is associated with a *korban*, it has become our custom to stand while reciting it.

In his commentary to the *Siddur*, **Horav Shimon Schwab, zl**, addresses the forty loaves which comprise the *Korban Todah*. He breaks them up into two categories: *Matzoh* and *chametz*. *Matzoh* symbolizes salvation from grave danger, as *Klal Yisrael* experienced during the exodus from Egypt. *Matzoh* commemorates *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Exodus. The *chametz*, unleavened bread, however, is symbolic of the daily *nissim*, miracles, which we enjoy, including the many miracles of which we are yet unaware. This is a reminder to thank Hashem, *Al nissim she'b'chol yom imanu*, 'For the miracles which are with us every day.'

Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, was asked why the *mizmor* begins with one's personal gratitude, then goes on to say *hariu kol haaretz*, "Call out to Hashem, everyone on earth." Why do all of earth's inhabitants have to join in gratitude? Should it not be a personal thing, since, after all, the *korban's* owner was the one who experienced the miracle?

Rav Kanievsky explained this with an incident that had occurred at one of the *shuls* in Bnei Brak.

After *davening* one day, one of the worshippers took out a tablecloth from a bag and spread it on the table. He then placed cake and whiskey on the table and invited everyone in *shul* to share in his good fortune. Apparently, the day before he had been crossing the *k'vish*, highway, and was hit by a car. He was thrown up into the air and landed on his side, but, other than a few slight bruises and a soiled suit, he was fine. He provided cake and whiskey, so that the participants would all have a *l'chaim*, good wishes, "to life," in honor of the miracle.

The next day, following the morning prayers, another member of the *shul* took out a small tablecloth, placed it on a table, and proceeded to place cake and whiskey on the table. He invited everyone to share in his *Kiddush*. "What happened to you?" they asked. "Perhaps you were also hit by a car?" "No," he answered. "Nothing of the sort. It is just that yesterday when I heard that fellow relate how he miraculously escaped serious injury, it dawned on me that I have been crossing that *k'vish* for the last twenty years, at the exact same place – and nothing has ever happened to me! Is that not a *neis*? I, therefore, want to thank Hashem publicly for all of His graciousness to me!"

Rav Kanievsky continued, "*Mizmor l'sodah* refers to one's personal deliverance from 'what might have been.' *Hariu l'Hashem kol ha'aretz*, seeing another person pay gratitude to the Almighty should spur one to introspect and realize how much he too owes Hashem. True, he may not have experienced any misfortune, but that in itself is a miracle!" We must stop taking our good fortune for granted. It is all a gift from Hashem.

There is another way to offer our gratitude to Hashem. **Horav Shmuel Kaidanover, zl**, was originally a *Rav* in Poland, and, after suffering brutally at the hands of Chemelnicki's barbarians during the *gezeiros*, decrees, of *Tach v'Tat*, 1648/1649, he escaped to Moravia, an impoverished, broken fugitive. He served as *Rav* in a number of *kehillos*, communities, in *Ashkenaz*, later returning in 1671 to Poland to assume the position of *Rav* of Cracow. In his *hakdamah*, preface, to his *Bircas HaZevach*, treatise on *Kodoshim*, he writes that this *sefer* is his *hodaah*, Thanksgiving-offering to Hashem, "I was left alone, broken, beaten, unable to walk. When Hashem decreed an upheaval of the many Jewish communities in Poland and Lithuania, I was then in Lublin. There the Cossacks plundered my valuable library and personal manuscripts, and there were plucked from me the lights of my life, my two young daughters, who were brutally murdered by the accursed barbarians. I was thrown into the street, rolling in the blood of many Jewish martyrs whose lives were sacrificed *Al Kiddush Hashem*, to sanctify Hashem's Name. Hungry and thirsty, with nothing but my shirt, I was left in the cold to die, but Hashem did not desert me in my moment of dire need. With His miraculous intervention, I was able to reach the city of Nikolsburg." Out of a sense of profound gratitude to Hashem, he decided to delve into *Seder Kodoshim*, with the *Bircas HaZevach* representing the fruits of his study.

No complaints, no condemning, just gratitude at its apex. This is how a Jew lives and accepts life.