

Aharon and his sons shall arrange it... before Hashem an eternal decree for their generations, from the Bnei Yisrael. (27:21)

There is an inspiring *Midrash* whose commentary on the *pasuk* “illuminates” for us the significance of, and proper attitude to the *middah*, character trait, of *ha’koras ha’tov*, gratitude. Hashem says, “I ask you to light the *Menorah* for Me not because I need the light. I want you to light it for Me as I illuminated for you (in the Wilderness). Thus, I will elevate your esteem in the eyes of the nations of the world, for they will then say, ‘Yisrael is lighting for the One Who lights for all.’”

The *Midrash* continues by offering an analogy to a blind man who was walking together with a *pikeiach*, healthy/perceptive (in this context), whose vision is unimpaired. The *pikeiach* said to the blind man, “Come, I will support you and lead the way.” When they arrived at their destination and were about to enter the house, the *pikeiach* said to the blind man, “Go and light a candle for me, so that you should not remain in my debt.” In other words, the healthy person sensing that the blind man would feel indebted to him, realized that there was a way to allow him his independence. A blind man’s ability to move around in a dark house is greater than one who can see. Thus, the *pikeiach* came up with an idea to preserve the blind man’s dignity.

Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita, observes the incredible foresight and *mentchlichkeit*, human decency, of this *pikeiach*. Not only did he make a point of caring for the physical needs of his blind friend, he also managed to find a way to maintain the man’s self-esteem – by giving him the opportunity to feel “needed,” to be a benefactor to someone, rather than a constant beneficiary. This parallels Hashem’s Divine ways. Does Hashem have needs? Does He require anything of us? Of course not! Indeed, everything that we possess, everything that we do, is from Him. Hashem illuminates the world, bringing light to each and every individual member of the world community. Yet, Hashem moves into the background by allowing the Jewish People to light for Him, thereby raising their value in the world.

Rav Shternbuch cites the *Baal Shem Tov* who offers an insightful interpretation of David *Ha’melech*’s statement in *Tehillim* 62:13, “And Yours, my Lord, is kindness, for You reward each man in accordance with his needs.” What does the Psalmist mean by this statement? The fact that Hashem rewards one for his positive actions is not an act of kindness, it is just – it is the correct thing to do. The *Besht* explains that we forget that the ability to carry out even the most simple activity originates from Hashem. We do nothing on our own. It is all Him. Without Hashem we are unable to act – period. Therefore, the fact that we receive reward for the actions that we execute by employing the power and ability that He grants us, is a *chesed*, kindness, from Hashem. We are not really acting. He is acting. Yet, He grants us reward. This is His kindness to us.

Veritably, when one gives some thought to how the world runs, he realizes that indeed, every aspect of human life is much like the *pikeiach* and the blind man. Hashem sustains the entire world. Those who toil relentlessly to earn that elusive “buck” do not grasp the fact that their effort neither

plays a role, nor is it necessary in order to enable one's particular portion of the proverbial "pie." Does he not understand that what he gathers in his specific field of endeavor is due to Hashem's altruism? This is how the intelligent, observant Jew should think and perceive life. Regrettably, this eludes many.

Rav Shternbuch quotes *Horav Moshe Yitzchak*, zl, the *Kelmer Maggid*, who said that people mistakenly think that by adding the often quoted but not as often contemplated, "*b'ezras Hashem*, with Hashem's help," one has fulfilled his obligation to Hashem. On the contrary, attributing one's success to Hashem's "assistance," is basically saying, "I did it, and Hashem helped." It is nothing more than *kochi v'otzem yadi asah li es ha'chayil ha'zeh*, "My strength and the might of my hand wrought for me all this wealth." The *b'ezras Hashem* is a little tidbit by which he includes Hashem together with his *kochi v'otzem yadi*. One must never forget that Hashem does not "assist," He is everything – He does it all!

V'zocharta es Hashem Elokecha ki Hu ha'nosein lecha koach laasos chayil, "Then you shall remember Hashem, Your G-d; for it is He Who gave you strength to make wealth" (*Devarim* 8:18). *Targum Onkelos* interprets this *pasuk* in an intriguing manner: *Arei Hu ya'haiv lach eitzah l'miknei nichsin*, "For it is He Who gave you the **advice** to purchase property." In other words, not only is Hashem responsible for your success in business, but even the original idea of what to buy and when to buy it came from Hashem. We are not much more than innocent bystanders.