

"And she conceived again and bore a son and she said 'This time I thank Hashem,' therefore she called his name Yehudah." (29:35)

The *Talmud Brachos 7b* comments that from the beginning of Creation there had never been a person who thanked Hashem until Leah. Leah was the originator of the "official" sense of gratitude one should express for the good Hashem accords us. This does not seem consistent with the text in *Parashas Chayei Sarah (4:52)*, where we note that upon securing Rivkah as a mate for Yitzchak, Eliezer bowed down in recognition to Hashem for providing Rivkah for Yitzchak. Why do *Chazal* attribute the distinction to Leah of being the first to offer gratitude?

Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, distinguishes between bowing down, which was the expression of gratitude selected by Eliezer, and the oral expression of gratitude exhibited by Leah. Perhaps Eliezer's behavior might be the source for the halachah for bowing down during the *Shemoneh Esrai* upon saying the *brachah* of *Modim*. This blessing recognizes Hashem's beneficence and accords Him gratitude. When one acknowledges Hashem's favor and offers his gratitude, he should bow in respect. Leah, however, was the first to express her gratitude - verbally, when she thanked Hashem for granting her motherhood for the fourth time.

Horav Bergman suggests another approach towards understanding *Chazal*. Indeed, Eliezer preceded Leah in expressing his gratitude to Hashem. There is a difference, however, between the two forms of gratitude. Although Eliezer acknowledged Hashem's favor, he nonetheless felt that Avraham was worthy of receiving the reward. Consequently, Eliezer thanked Hashem for what he felt was "owed" him. After all, Hashem promised Avraham that a great nation would emerge from him. In contrast, Leah felt that whatever she received from Hashem was more than she deserved. This is consistent with *Rashi's* explanation of the *pasuk*, "This time I thank Hashem." What is so unique about "this" time, "this" son? She saw *b'ruach ha'Kodesh* that Yaakov would have twelve tribes. Each wife would then have three sons, if the tribes were to be "divided" equally among Yaakov's wives. When she gave birth to her fourth son, she felt she had received more than her due share.

The *Midrash* teaches us that as a result of Leah's expression of gratitude, she merited that her descendants, Yehudah and *David Ha'Melech*, would exemplify themselves in their ability to "confess". This is enigmatic. What is the relationship between Leah's expression of gratitude and the confession of *David Ha'Melech* and Yehudah, who confessed to being guilty of a misdeed? Accepting the onus of guilt is somewhat different than acknowledging gratitude.

Horav A.H. Leibowitz, Shlita, infers a fascinating lesson from this *Midrash*. *Hakoras hatov*, recognition of the good one receives, and *hakoras ha'cheit*, recognizing that one has sinned, accepting and conceding guilt, both originate from one source - the *middah* of *emes*, truth. An individual who is a truthful person, who is a man of integrity and rectitude, who sees everything

through the perspective of absolute *emes*, has no problem recognizing the kindness he receives from Hashem. He is likewise quick to confess his guilt upon transgressing. He does not attempt to lamely justify his wrongdoing by painting it with a coat of false innocence. Similarly, he will not foolishly think that he himself is the source of his own success. He attributes success to Hashem and accepts guilt upon himself. This is an *ish emes*, a truthful person. One who is not a *makir tov* is not an *ish emes*. He is no different than the sinner who refuses to acknowledge his transgression. Leah imbued this sense of truth in her descendants, who reflected this character trait in their total demeanor.