

"If for a thanksgiving he offers it." (7:12)

Rabeinu Bachya asserts that a *chasan* and *kallah* should offer a *korban todah* in gratitude for their abundant joy. This seems inconsistent with the *Talmud* in *Berachos 54b* which cites the injunction that one who has been saved from danger must bring a *korban todah*. There are four general categories of people who are required to bring a *korban todah*. They are those who have crossed a wilderness, those who have been imprisoned, those who have been dangerously ill, and those who have crossed a sea. These are people who had been in situations that could have cost them their lives, but they were spared through Hashem's mercy. From what danger were the young *chasan* and *kallah* saved which would require a *korban todah*?

Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita, cites the *Talmud* in *Sotah 2a* which states that pairing a young couple is as "difficult" as the splitting of the Red Sea." Consequently, the joining of two young people is in itself a miracle. Therefore, it behooves the young couple to acknowledge the receipt of this unique gift with a *korban* demonstrating their gratitude.

We may suggest another parallel between marriage and the four who were spared from death. These people have just had the occasion to reflect upon their past, thus raising their awareness of the present. They have been availed of an invaluable opportunity for a second look at their life's experiences, which enables them to nurture a greater appreciation of Hashem's gifts. Life, health, and material abundance are things we take for granted until they are "almost" taken from us. At that time it behooves us to reflect, acknowledge, and hold dear all of our blessings. A near-death experience undoubtedly motivates an individual to express "*todah*." We now appreciate our "new" self.

When two people join in marriage, they merge to create a new being. Each has now attained *shleimus*, completion. The inherent joy catalyzed by this recognition should imbue them with this realization. They now recognize that their "past" pales in comparison to their "new" self. This new consciousness must stimulate a sense of gratitude, concretized by offering a *korban todah*. Whenever one is inspired to appreciate his current situation, an expression of gratitude is appropriate.