

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

Paying gratitude to the Almighty when everything seems to be going our way is very convenient. Everyone would agree that we have an obligation to acknowledge our debt of gratitude. What about when our prayers are answered with a reply that we find “unacceptable” – when the answer is, “No”? Do we still thank Hashem? We should understand that Hashem is either testing our reaction or He is saving the positive response that we crave for another time. Unfortunately, gratitude under unagreeable, trying circumstances requires cognitive deliberation, hindsight as well as foresight, to understand, accept and show our appreciation for what Hashem does for us.

The *Pnei Menachem* paid a *shivah* call to comfort a grieving family. While there, he presented the following question. In *Hallel/Sefer Tehillim* (116: 4,13), David *Hamelech* declares, *Tzarah v'yagon emtza*; “Distress and grief I would find.” The *pasuk* ends. The next *pasuk* begins, *U'b'Shem Hashem ekra*, “Then I would invoke the Name of Hashem.” At that point, a break occurs in the *pesukim* between the grief and the gratitude. In *pasuk* 13, however, David declares, *Kos yeshua esa, u'b'Shem Hashem ekra*, “I will raise the cup of salvation, and the Name of Hashem I will invoke.” In this case, no break occurs. Why? *Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl*, explains that when our cup is overflowing with good fortune, the gratitude just oozes forth. It is an immediate response to the positive. When we are dealing with grief, challenge and adversity, however, we need to stop, take a break, and mull it over before we realize that we have a *chov kadosh*, sacred obligation, to thank Hashem for everything – even if we do not understand His actions concerning our lives. Thus, when life is good we declare, *kos yeshuos esa*. When it is *tzarah v'yagon emtza*, we must (especially now) thank Hashem.

Horav Avraham Grodzensky's rebbetzin was *nifteres*, passed away, at a young age, leaving him to raise his ten children. It was an epic tragedy. He tore *kriah*, rent his garment in mourning, but did not recite the *berachah*, *Baruch Dayan HaEmes*; “Blessed is the True Judge” (which is usually recited at the time of *kriah*). He waited until the third day of *shivah*, seven-day mourning period, and then recited the blessing. He explained, “*Chazal* teach that one must bless Hashem when confronted with adversity (death) as he would when he is the recipient of good fortune. *Chazal* charge us to recognize and acknowledge that nothing bad comes from Hashem. Thus, our attitude toward both must be the same. It took me three days to accept this reality cognitively.”

If a person acknowledges that even the pain and adversity which appear to him as “bad” are really for his good, he will have a deeper understanding of the notion that “bad” and “good” are in reality both good.