

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

The *Korban Todah*, Thanksgiving Offering, is special because it allows one who is the beneficiary of Hashem's kindness to express his gratitude. Indeed, it is important to allow those to whom we reach out to in some manner to repay those favors. Otherwise, they feel humbled by not being able to return the favor. Gratitude does not necessarily have to be commensurate with the favor received. Some people who are the beneficiaries of the largesse of others are just not able to reciprocate. For instance, an individual who has been blessed with extraordinary material bounty is very generous with his acts of kindness to those who are financially challenged. He recently made a *simchah*, replete with the luxurious hall and exotic foods from the latest in meat boards, aged wines and artistic pastry. One of his many beneficiaries asked me, "What can I possibly do to show my gratitude for all that he does for me?" I replied, "Send a homemade kugel with a thoughtful note." After the *simchah*, the benefactor told me that out of all of the gifts that he received to adorn the tables at the *simchah*, the homemade kugel and heartfelt note impacted him the most, because it was from the heart. It took effort, not a credit card.

We often gloss over another aspect of gratitude. In addition to the actual favor that the benefactor provides, he also gives recognition to the beneficiary. The fact that he favored him indicates that he considers him worthy of favor, a person whom he values. When one offers assistance, he demonstrates a respect for the beneficiary as a person. When someone does a favor for his fellow, it is not just an isolated act. It can signify a deeper level of trust, respect and connection with that person.

With this in mind, we suggest that gratitude connotes two aspects: a sign of appreciation for favors received; and a deep-rooted gratitude for indicating by your favor that you respect me as a person. Thus, when Hashem provides for us, He shows that He values us, and this in and of itself, is reason for showing our gratitude to Him. Perhaps this is what David *Hamelech* alludes to when he says (*Tehillim* 50:23), *Zoveiach todah yichabdaneni*, "He who offers confession honors Me." On the surface, David *Hamelech* is teaching us the importance of confessing one's transgressions upon offering a *korban*. It demonstrates the petitioner's sincerity. The commentators allude to the requisite of *hakoras hatov*, recognizing the gifts that we receive, especially from Hashem. Noticeably, the word *yechabdaneni* is written with an added "*nun*," when it could have been written *yechabdeni*. In a well-known explanation, the *Ksav Sofer* writes that, when a person sits back and reflects upon the good that has resulted from the trouble for which he required Hashem's salvation, he will realize that what he had previously thought was adverse was actually a gift from Heaven. When *Klal Yisrael* stood at the banks of the Red Sea and saw the many miracles and wonders, they realized that the actual *shibud*, bondage, to which they had been subjected was to their benefit. [Otherwise, they would not have reached this auspicious milestone.] Thus, it is *yechabdaneni* – a double gratitude.

*Rabbi Akiva Eiger* posits that *pasuk* as alluding to the centrality of the attribute of gratitude and its domino effect. One who shows his gratitude can expect to "hear" from his benefactor again when

he needs him. One who demonstrates an attitude of entitlement about the favors he receives can forget about repeat performances. The finest, most altruistic benefactor expects some form of recognition, however slight, just to acknowledge his assistance. Thus, one who demonstrates his gratitude can look forward to other opportunities. This is hinted by *yechabdanani* – double gratitude – now and later – if necessary.

Returning to our earlier suggestion that gratitude has two aspects – for the actual favor; and for the respect the beneficiary received – we posit that this is the underlying idea of double gratitude. The beneficiary realizes that he actually has two reasons for being grateful – *yichabeda neni*. Thank you, Hashem, for considering me worthy of Your favor.