

And you shall tell your son on that day. (13:8)

The *Rambam* (*Sefer HaMitzvos* 157) writes that it is mandatory for us to remember/reflect on the various trials and tribulations that we experienced in Egypt, so that we can properly pay gratitude to Hashem for saving us. Unless one understands the pain, he is unable to be *makir tov*, pay gratitude. *Horav Yaakov Cohen, zl*, delves into *Rambam's* source for this comment. Nowhere in the Torah does *hakoras hatov* play a role in the *mitzvah* to remember Egypt. He cites the *AbudRaham*, who quotes *Rishonim*, who explain the term *haggadah*, which serves as the *sefer* night's primer, as being derived from the declaration accompanying the bringing of the *Bikkurim*, *Higadeti ha'yom l'Hashem Elokecha*, "I told today to Hashem, your G-d." The *Targum Yerushalmi* interprets *haggadah* as a language of *hodaah*, gratitude. Thus, this can serve as a source for the *Rambam's* position that *v'higadeta le'vincha* is an expression denoting gratitude.

With this idea, *Rav Cohen* distinguishes between the constant *mitzvah* to relate the story of the Exodus and the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* that applies to *Pesach* night. On *Pesach*, we do more than relate; we thank. Every word that we utter is an expression of appreciation and gratitude.

Perhaps this is why the *Seder* has received such overwhelming acceptance throughout the Jewish community. To the serious-minded Jew, relating the story of the Exodus is both a *mitzvah* and an expression of gratitude. The less-than-observant Jew might not be into *mitzvah* performance, but who does not appreciate a thanksgiving celebration? Furthermore, the *Pesach seder* is a formative experience, passed down through the generations. It shapes our perspective of freedom, responsibility and connection to Hashem. The gratitude expressed at the *sefer* is not merely for favors received, events of the past which have transformed us. It is our gratitude for the ongoing freedom and identity shaped by the Exodus.