

## Pesach Days 1&2 5777

Hakarat Hatov: <sup>1</sup>One of the key messages which we can learn from the events of *Galut Mitzrayim* and the subsequent *Ge'ulah* is the *middah* of *Hakarat Hatov* – recognising the good. The opposite of the *middah* is being *Kafui Tov* – unappreciative of good, and appears to be the initiating factor of the decline of *Galut Mitzrayim*. The Passuk says (Shemot 1:8) “And a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Yosef”. That Pharaoh denied the good that Yosef had done for him and the rest of Egypt.

In contrast, we see that Moshe displays tremendous *Hakarat Hatov*, not just to people but even to inanimate objects! The first two of the Ten Plagues required the Nile to be hit to turn it into blood or to cause frogs to arise from the Nile. Since Moshe had been saved by the Nile as a baby, he felt that to perform these actions now would be *Kafui Tov* – denying the good that was done for him.

This approach Moshe also extended to the third Plague, lice, which were brought about through the sand of the earth. The reason in this case was that Moshe had been a beneficiary of the earth some years earlier. When Moshe had killed the Egyptian (whom he had observed continually harassing and tormenting one of the Jewish slaves), the sand had covered up the evidence at least for a short while. Therefore Moshe here too felt it was not appropriate for him to perform this plague, and so the first three plagues were carried out by Aharon instead.

It seems striking that Moshe had *Hakarat Hatov* for an inanimate object – surely if everything which happens to us is from Hashem, we should direct our thanks to Him and not to the beneficiary He chose to use?! Similarly, we know that when something which we perceive as bad happens to us, we should not *Chas Veshalom* take it out on the messenger, and should instead realise that everything comes from Hashem.

Rav Nebenzahl explains that the word *Hoda'ah* meaning gratitude refer to both admitting the truth and acknowledging the good that another has done for you. He explains that a person needs to have contradictory attributions. On the one hand, a person should not give himself credit for good acts he does, while he should blame

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<sup>1</sup> Ideas for this originate from “The Rav Nebenzahl Haggadah”, “Hamo’adim BeHalachah” and [https://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rsac\\_vaera.html](https://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rsac_vaera.html)

himself for any bad things he does. On the other hand, when one is the recipient of good, he should give full credit to the benefactor, while when one is the recipient of bad, he should not “shoot the messenger” but should attribute the events to Hashem as having an ultimate purpose for the good. Thus we see the strength of *Hakarat Hatov* which one must have and we can begin to understand why Moshe was forbidden to perform any of the first three *Makkot* due to the requirement for *Hakarat Hatov* even to an inanimate object.

Much of Pesach is spent in praise and thanks to Hashem, for example, the *Shirat Hayam*, *Hallel*, *Dayeinu* (where we recite in detail each individual aspect for which we are giving thanks) and also the songs at the end of the Seder, such as *Chad Gadya*, where we show that we recognise (*Makir*) that everything comes from Hashem.

The following is based (non-verbatim) on a beautiful idea brought by Rav Zevin in his *Sefer Hamo’adim BeHalachah*.

There appears to be a discrepancy in the way that we (*Bnei Yisrael*) refer to this Yom Tov and the way in which Hashem refers to it. When we speak about this Yom Tov, we refer to it as “Pesach”, to remember, and show *Hakarat Hatov* to Hashem that He skipped over (*Pasach*) the houses of *Bnei Yisrael* during the final plague, *Makat Bechorot* and saved us. Conversely, Hashem in the Torah refer to this Yom Tov as “*Chag HaMatzos*” – to remember and be praise *Bnei Yisrael* for having been so eager to fulfil His command that they rushed out of Egypt without leaving enough time for the dough to rise.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev compares this idea to what is written in the respective *tefillin* that we wear and that Hashem wears. In our *tefillin*, it is written “*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*” – Hear O Yisrael, Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One. Thus we are focussed and directed towards *Achdut Hashem*.

In harmony with this, Hashem’s *tefillin* (Berachos, 6a) recite “*Mi ke’amcha yisrael goi echad ba’aretz*” – who is like Your people Yisrael, one nation on the earth? That is, Hashem too is focused on the praise of *Bnei Yisrael*. Thus we find the beauty of a harmonious relationship between us and Hashem, and *bein adam lechaveiro*, can be sustained and developed by recognising, appreciating and acknowledging, what the other person has done for us and focusing on that. May this knowledge and awareness bring us to a harmonious and peaceful Yom Tov during which we can grow in connection to Hashem and our fellow man.