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The Importance of Hakarat Hatov
THE BIG AND THE SMALL – THANK YOU!
Rabbi Raymond Beyda

Many people in general have a problem with saying Thank You. Many will not accept a gift, because this will require them to say "Thank You". We must learn to have Hakarat Hatov; gratitude and appreciation. After Adam HaRishon sinned, he started to see the world go dark, and it was before he had ever experienced night, and he started to cry. When he woke up in the morning he started to sing "Mizmor Shir L'Yom HaShabat Tov LeHodot LeHashem" – A song for the Shabat day it is good to give thanks to Hashem.

After Kayin sinned, he went to trial and he was found guilty. He was very sad. When he was walking out of his trial he bumped into Adam HaRishon. Adam asked him what happened in his trial. And Kayin told his father that if it was not for the fact that I admitted, I would have been gone forever. At that moment Adam HaRishon said "Tov LeHodot LeHashem" – It is good to admit (confess) to Hashem.

The Midrash says that in this world only a select few give thanks or admit to Hashem but in the next world every one does. Noach after the Mabul, brought a Korban. Avraham comes to Eretz Yisrael he brought a Korban. Yaakov after coming back from the house of Lavan he brought a Korban. Our Avot all brought Korbanot of thanks to Hashem.

The Gemara in Brachot says Rav Yochanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai that there was no one in the world who gave thanks to Hashem until Leah. "Hapam Hoda Et Hashem" She did this after she had her fourth son. When she got more than her share.

When a person feels that he is owed something, he does not feel gratitude. When was the last time you heard someone say "Thank You" when they receive their paycheck. Why should I say thank you, I earned it! We must view everything as a "free gift". Only then will we say a genuine "Thank You" This is why all the thank you's before Leah's were not viewed by our Chachamim as real thanks, because hers was a thank you of something she viewed that she didn't deserve she was supposed to get three children and when she got an "extra" she was able to give a genuine "thank you"

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Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said that from the day of creation until Leah, there wasn't anyone who was able to teach us the correct way of performing the Mitzvah of saying thank you until Leah came along and taught us. The fact that you must feel that what you are getting is a Matanat Chinam, is not an extra bonus to the Mitzvah of saying thank you, it is the essence of the Mitzvah!

Out of all the Shevatim, we are named after Yehuda. We are called Yehudim. This is because the essence of a Jew is to Thank. It is very easy to thank Hakadosh Baruch Hu, when big miracles happen in our lives. When a person finds his zivug or gets a huge business deal. But we must know that we have to thank Hashem for all the little things in life too. Thank Hashem for the cup of coffee in the morning, or that you have air conditioning in the summer, or a coat in the winter. Each person must look at their lives, and they will see how many tiny gifts Hashem gives us constantly, and we must thank Hashem EVEN for them!

Imagine we set up a Jewish Holiday Committee, and the JHC must come up with a holiday and rituals to commemorate all the things we went through. Its time to create a holiday to remember Yetziat Mitzrayim and the miracles in the desert. Okay lets think...maybe we should make a holiday where all the Jews take a jar of Ma'an and dance around it and celebrate the amazing miracle of this spiritual food. Which is all good and no bad. NOPE! Next...Okay maybe we should make a holiday celebrating the splitting of the sea, we should all sit in between to things of water. NOPE! Next...maybe we should have a holiday to celebrate the Be'er Miriam the well of Miriam that supplied 3 million people with water in the desert AMAZING MIRACLE...NOPE....So what miracle do we celebrate? The HUTS! We must thank Hsahem, for some simple shade! Compared to the other miracles its NOTHING! This is to teach us, that we MUST thank Hashem for the little things that we take for granted.

During the time of Succot we bring all the harvested produce in. Hashem is telling us all that produce, know that it was not "Kochi Votzem Yadi Asa Li Et HaChayil Haze" Know that it wasn't you, it was Hashem. Simple food, we must thank Hashem!

Thank you Hashem for all the miracles that You have performed today! Modim Anachnu Lach. WHAT MIRACLES! I didn't see any seas split or ground open up? You woke this morning that is a

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miracle, you went to the bathroom another miracle, you drank a coffee that's a miracle, for getting to work safely MIRACLE! For having children MIRACLE! WOW you had lunch today MIRACLE! This is only the BIG stuff, but we must look deeper to see all the little things, the big stuff is just a flash of lighting to open our eyes!

What power does thank you have? Anyone who reads Ashrei three times, is promised that he is a Ben Olam Haba. The Gemara says one of the reasons is because its because its in the Alef Bet, so the Gemara asks why then don't we say Kuf Yud Tet which has 8 pesukim for each letter. So the Gemara, answers so we say it because it says Poteach Et Yadecha! But there are others that speak of the substance of Hashem. So the Gemara says that this one has both the Alef Bet and Hashem's substance so that is why we say it. Anyone who reads this mizmor and sees all the good that Hashem gives us, this will make him want to keep Mitzvot. Because anyone who sees all the good that someone did for him, will feel indebted to him. All Neshamot will praise Hashem, will thank Hashem for every Nishima(breath) Recognizing the good Hashem does for us is the key to bring us to Olam Haba.

The Tur says that it is our custom to end the Mizmor with the Pasuk Vaanachnu Nevarech Ya Meata Ve'ad Olam Haleluya! By getting used to praising Hashem on this world we will be worthy of praising Hashem in the world to come! The Mishnah in Brachot says that we must thank Hashem for the bad just like we do for the good. We must say Baruch Dayan HaEmet with the same gusto as we do Shechianu! Hakadosh Baruch Hu comes to Moshe Rabeinu and says "Its time for you to go free the Jews" instead of saying okay I am going! NOW! Moshe answers wait, I just have to take care of something first! Since Yitro took me in and I lived there, I have to go thank Yitro, and ask him to leave. In the face of saving the Jewish people, he said hold on, I have to go say thank you!

There once was a king who had only one son, and all the workers of the king were jealous of this son, because he had everything good. One day the son did something against the Malchut. The father expelled his son to the wilderness. The son thought my dad doesn't love me. The king sent his men to follow the son, and make sure he is ok, but to never expose themselves to the son, so he can feel his punishment and repent. One day the boy was attacked by a bear, and miraculously he was saved. A couple of days later a wolf attack him and again saved by a miracle. This happened several times. After a while the son realized that something must be up. My father must be behind this. He started to

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appreciate the random food that he found and the protection that he got. After realizing this he started to realize his love for his father, and did Teshuvah!

We are in Galut, and we don't see Hashem. And many times we think its us that are doing things, I avoided the accident, miraculously I made the business deal etc. Too many miracles, if you look around you will realize that Your Father is watching over you and protecting and providing for you! A person who spends time talking about Yetziyat Mitzrayim Harey Ze Meshubach. One of the famous Chassidic Rebbes said Ze is you. You become praiseworthy. When you look at all the things that Hashem does for us, you feel gratitude towards Hashem. And you want to do more for Him.

Our Amidah starts ATTAH! Attah chonen L'Adam Da'at. When you realize its Attah its all You Hashem, everything I get is a Matanat Chinam from You, then you are ready to continue to ask all the requests in the Amidah!

The Chovot Halevavot says every individual is commanded to take a calculation of their Soul. To look at the good that Hashem does for him, in general and the little stuff. And a Hashem fearing person should look at how much he owes Hashem according to his ability. Each person gets a different package to come to this world with, and the same is with the Cheshbon HaNefesh is not the same by every person. We must all look at our lives and see what Hashem does and has done for US! Its upon a person to praise Hashem not only for the Miracles but for every little thing that comes to him in his life. We must admit that we did nothing and that everything is from Hashem and say Thank You Hashem for EVERYTHING! The big miracles and the little things that we are accustomed to overlook! AMEN.