

הכרת הטוב - Seeing The Bigger Picture

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

In this week's Parsha, the Torah discusses the Mitzvah of Bikkurim. After bringing the first fruits to the Kohen, the owner says a speech detailing Hashem's Chesed from saving us from Lavan to taking us out of Mitzrayim, then ultimately bringing us into Eretz Yisrael. At the end of this speech he says (26:10), "And now, behold I am bringing my first fruits that you Hashem gave me, and I am placing it in front of Hashem."

The Seforno comments on this Pasuk and says, "After I know the abundant good and kindness that You bestowed upon us, You made us into a nation worthy of inheriting Eretz Yisrael, and you freed us from slavery so that we would be capable of receiving a gift. You gave us the most select land, and the choicest of places.....Behold I am bringing the first of my fruits that Hashem has given me...to give thanks for them."

The Seforno implies that expressing gratitude for the fruits alone would not be enough. One is required to also focus on all the steps that led to receiving that good. We can derive an insight into Hakaras Hatov from this Seforno. If we wish to experience the full feeling of gratitude, it is essential to express Hakaras Hatov for everything that made it possible to receive this gift.

An example of this would be as is quoted in the Tosfos Rid, in his commentary on the Haggadah,

where he addresses the question of why the Haggadah mentions our blemished past as being descendants of idol worshippers. He explains that in truth, we can ask: Why are we praising Hashem for taking us out of the suffering of Egypt? And why are we thanking Hashem for granting us freedom? If He wouldn't have put us in Egypt in the first place, He wouldn't have had to free us? It is this question that the Haggadah is answering by mentioning our blemished past. The Haggadah is saying, Hashem wanted to give us Shabbos, the Torah and the Beis Hamikdash. However, even with all of His mercy and compassion, our past of descending from idol worshippers left a genetic imperfection that made us undeserving of these gifts. Therefore, Hashem had to subject us to the suffering of Egypt, so that He would be able to have compassion on us, and bestow upon us the greatest gifts ever given to mankind.

Based on the above Seforno our expression of appreciation for Shabbos, the Torah, and the Beis Hamikdash has to also include Hakaros Tov for the suffering of Mitzrayim, as it allowed us to receive these gifts. This idea has broad ramifications, as it requires us to always look at the good that we receive within the greater context of the pieces that led to it.