



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Shemot

HAMELECH

Thank You

"A new king arose in Egypt who did not know Yosef."

How could he not know Yosef? Yosef had ruled in Egypt for 80 years! He saved the nation and the world from famine! Who could have not known him?!

Ahh! For sure Pharaoh knew him! But he acted as if he did not know him! He worked on himself to be oblivious to all of the good which Yosef had done for Egypt.

Pharaoh was ungrateful. And this is our discussion today. The topic of Appreciation vs. Ungratefulness. Pharaoh is the quintessential ingrate.

Thank You II

In Mishlei (17:13) we learn: Someone who returns a favor with an affront, evil will not leave his home. Rabbeinu Yonah expounds: It's bad enough that he did not bestow goodness upon his benefactor. He even returned bad in response to the good.

Adam Harishon is labelled an "ingrate". Hashem gave him a wife as a great gift. What did he say? Thank you? No! He said, "That lady which you gave to be with me – she's the one who fed me from the forbidden tree and I ate!"

He blamed his wife for his mistake.

The Generation of Dispersal also sinned due to a lack of gratefulness. Hashem showered them with wealth and prosperity, and they rebelled against him. (See Rashi to Bereishis 11:5)

Yosef in Mitzrayim

Yosef was challenged in Mitzrayim. His master's wife tried to seduce him to sin. He said, "I can't. I can't do that to him. My master is so good to me. I cannot do this against him."

We see that *hakarat hatov* can save a person from sin.

Yosef told his brothers, through a messenger, "You paid back evil for good. My master invited you to dine with him in the palace and you steal his special goblet!"

He accused them of being ungrateful.

It's Just Not Worth It

Why do some people find it so hard to express appreciation? Because they do not want to feel indebted to the other person. People like to feel free. If you admit that you received something from another, you become obligated to treat that person in a special way. People who do not want to feel indebted tend to overlook all the good things done for them.

But it is not really worth it! As Sefer Chassidim says, ingrates get punished very quickly. An example of this is Naval (Shmuel I 25:16). David Hamelech was protective of Naval. Nonetheless, when David asked for some food for his starving men, the wealthy Naval refused with disdain. Immediately, Hashem plagued Naval and he died ten days later.

Don't Deny, Don't Defy

One who denies a favor given to him by man will eventually deny HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Take



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Pharaoh, for example. At first, he ignored all that Yosef had done for him and his people. Later on, when speaking with Moshe, he said, "I do not acknowledge Hashem's existence as a power."

Really, we should be full of *hakarat hatov* to Hashem. Our problem is that we do not see it with our physical senses. We have to activate our brains. The *yetzer hara* calls it "nature" and "that's just how the world runs." Rising sun, wind, fruits and grains growing. It is all *chasdei Hashem*. And what does the *yetzer hara* say? "Nature." Kefira!

So it is easier to begin with *chasdei habriot*. Look at what your parents did/do for you. Your siblings, your spouse, your friends, etc. Think about it, contemplate, ponder, focus on the details. Think: How would life be were I to lack _____?

Appreciate what you have.

No Rock-throwing!

Rava said: A popular proverb is: Do not throw a rock into the well from which you drank.

Raba bar Mori said: That's a *pasuk*! The Torah tells us not to reject the Egyptians because we were strangers in their land. They helped to estrange us, not allowing us to assimilate. For that alone we should be so appreciative!

What did Professor Yinon tell the man who complained? Go and read the sign. What did it say on the sign? It was posted outside the washroom and upon it were written the words of the blessing, *Asher Yatzar*.

Professor Yinon was not an observant Jew. But he knew that every moment of life is a gift from Hashem. He should then take it a step further. If

Hashem grants one so many gifts, what can I do for Him? I do not need to be so innovative nor creative. I do not need to send Him a cake or mail Him a thank you card. I just have to do His mitzvot. That's all. That's real *hakarat hatov*.

The Rabbi's Last *Drasha*

Rabbi Yonatan of Prague was first Rav of a small town. When a group of distinguished community leaders came from Prague and asked him to accept the Rabbinate, he sent the letter to the leaders of the town. They ignored it.

R' Yonatan slowly began packing up and loading up the wagon. No one approached. The wagon was full, ready to go. No one came to say goodbye. No one came to ask him to stay longer.

R' Yonatan called everyone together for his departing *drasha*. Everyone came and he exhorted them many times, "Do not forsake Hashem."

When he finished, the community leaders asked him why he chose that topic. He explained, "I put a lot of effort into bettering this community. As I prepared to leave, not a single person approached me to give any words of appreciation or to ask me to stay around. I sensed that the people here lack *hakarat hatov*. And you know where that leads to? Forgetting about Hashem! So I exhorted them to remember."

Let us work on appreciating each other and appreciating Hashem. It is the best recipe for being a continual recipient for goodness.

**Shabbat Shalom,
Mordechai Malka**