

## בקשות בתוך הודאות הרב חיים קסמן

In the *beracha* we make before drinking the second *Kos* of the Seder, the *beracha* of "אשר גאלנו", we add in a *bakasha* for the future. In the *sefer* משלחן ר' אליה ברוך, R. Elya Boruch makes the *ha'oro* that it seems to be out of sync to ask a *bakasha* in the middle of a ברכת השבח. This *ha'oro* is already addressed by Rishonim; the Maharam Chalva in *Maseches Pesachim* cites R. Hai Gaon that the *beracha* is in fact two separate *berachos*, one on the past and one for the future. However, the form our *beracha* takes is all in one, which leads R. Elya Boruch to his *ha'oro*.

He wants to link this to הלל, where it seems that when we are at the climax of giving praise to Hakadosh Boruch Hu, we say "אנא ה' הושיענא נא אנא ה' הצליחה נא". This is another example of *bakasha* amidst שירה ושבח לה. Again, the question is how does this fit?

R. Dovid Cohen addresses this in his *sefer* on Sukkos, and he answers that the height of being *makir tov* to Hashem for bestowing *tov* upon you is to ask for more *tov*. In doing so, we are stating that not only is the Ribono Shel Olam the source for all the *tov* which we have received in the past, but He really is the ongoing source of any *tovah* that we have. Therefore, it is fitting to be *mevakesh* as an expression of the degree of הודאה we have to Hakadosh Boruch Hu.

Tosafos in *Maseches Sukkah* brings the *posuk* of, "אז ירננו כל עצי יער", as a reference to the נענועים of the *lulav*. The רינה is the depth of our acknowledgement of Hashem as the source of all things is such that we ask Him to continue and add more *tovah*.

This insight that asking for more is a sincere expression of *hakoras hatov* can help us understand the *avodah* of "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים". The degree to which we see ourselves as leaving Mitzrayim is the degree with which can be מודה לה. The *tzura* of the Haggada is to come to הכרת הטוב, and which is why the *ikkur pesukim* of סיפור יציאת מצרים are the *pesukim* of *Bikkurim*. *Bikkurim* is an expression of *hakoras hatov* to Hakadosh Boruch Hu. As well, the *meforshim* explain that even if the *mitzvah* of זכירת יציאת מצרים will not be performed לבוא לעתיד (R. Chaim explains this to be why Rambam does not include it in his count of the 613 Mitzvos), nonetheless, סיפור יציאת מצרים will still be *noheg* because *hakoras hatov* is *mechayev hakoro* and *hoda'a* on every single detail. An example of this in the Haggada is the *piyut* of "דייני".

The word "דייני" is popularly translated as meaning "this *tovah* would have been enough, even if the Ribono Shel Olam didn't do more for us...", which leads to many questions such as understanding the meaning of coming to Har Sinai but not receiving the Torah. The Malbim points this out and offers a different *teitch* for "דייני". It means that each little item would have been enough to be *mechayev* us in *hoda'a* to the Ribono Shel Olam, not that the *toivos* themselves would have been enough individually.

Rambam learns the *mitzvah* of "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים" to be what it sounds like. He writes to see oneself as an *eved* who has gained his freedom. This is a tremendous *madreiga* which we are asked to live up to in seeing ourselves as having personally left Mitzrayim. On the other hand, the Rambam learns that it is not a *chovas halevavos* of *hakara* and *machshava*, of awareness, rather it is a *chovas ayvorim*. The *girsas* which we have in the Rambam reads, "חייב אדם להראות עצמו", which means to physically do things to show our freedom such as הסיבה.

The *girsas* in our Haggada is "חייב אדם לראות עצמו", and when we combine that with the Rambam's understanding of an actual slave being freed, we have this challenge of truly reliving that experience. If we look through the Haggada, we see first that we refer to *matzah* as something which our fathers experience (די "אכלו אבהתנא", but then way say "עבדים היינו", that we were slaves. There seems to be a progression, a growth, along the Haggada where we work from it being an ancestor's experience until the "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים". In the *beracha* after *Magid* we go further by stating, "אשר גאלנו וגאל", putting ourselves first before our fathers. We reach this *madreiga* through the course of the Haggada through telling over the story with its details to instill it within us to feel as if we were personally there. The הלל with which we end *Magid* is an outburst of song reflecting our joy and gratitude for being free. It's not a regular reading of הלל (Brisker Rov). This follows the theme of truly identifying with the leaving of Mitzrayim as though we ourselves left.

At the beginning of "הא לחמא עניא", the Vilna Gaon explains the different forms of poverty which a person can have. He explains that they correspond to the four types of people who must give *hoda'a*. There is

a correlation to עוני and הודאה. When a person experiences a form of poverty and then leaves that poverty, there is an inherent sense of gratitude for getting out of it. The fifth kind of *oni*, he explains, is עניית בדעת, not knowing one's own identity. We experienced all forms of עוני in Mitzrayim and, therefore, all have an important *chiyuv* of הודאה for גאולת מצרים and becoming the עבד הנבחר. This is all in the theme of *hakoras hatov* and to the degree with which we understand how deep in poverty we were in Mitzrayim will we be able to express *hakoras hatov* and *hoda'a* to Hakadosh Boruch Hu for the *geula*.

We can bring out this idea of the Gaon a little bit more with the *gemara* קדושין סו. The *gemara* relates a story of Yanai Hamelech. When he returned from a successful *milchama*, he and his companions sat down for a *seudah* of מלוחים, which is מאכל עניים, upon a שולחן של זהב, which is obviously a sign of great wealth. The idea is that the *shiur* of *hakoras hatov* which a person will have is always commensurate to the degree which he remembers and relives the lack and poverty which he had. When, at the same time, he experiences the wealth that he now has obtained, the combination of the lack and the wealth bring about a much deeper sense of gratitude.

We see that the whole theme of יציאת מצרים isn't just to be מיסד אמונה, but it is also to express and feel *hakoras hatov* for being the עבד הנבחר. That is why we also ask HaKadosh Boruch Hu for more. We see Him as the source for everything worthwhile in our lives and thank him for it, while asking for more. We do this in הלל as well as in the *beracha* of "אשר גאלנו".

R. Weinberg used to always say, in the beginning of *Parshas Bo* the Torah says "למען תספר באזני בנך... וידעתם כי אני ה' (שמות י: ג). ובן בנך. In order to know it yourself, you have to tell it over to someone else because then you are *koneh* your own greater *shaychus* to it. So, we do this during *Magid* and say the things we know to become sensory, not just knowing what happened but feeling it to be real. The *koach hadibbur* is a tremendous tool in accomplishing this.

A second level in this is to describe things in a way to bring out what it's like for it to happen. I once heard R. Reuven Leichter that when one tells over the *neis* of Moshe Rabbeinu's neck turning to marble when Paroah ordered him to be executed, you must explain the detail of the executioner's arm shaking from the vibration of smashing his sword on stone. If you leave that part out, then you're missing a piece of making it alive and real.

Another idea about this is that which the *Ba'alei Mussar* discuss that one should visualize these great events. We should have a picture in our minds of יציאת מצרים and קריעת ים סוף. I once heard that R. Chaim Shmulevitz one time during *bein hazmanim* filled up the עזרת נשים balcony in Mir Yeshiva with *shtenders* and then waded through them. He did this as a living *tziyur* of ים סוף קריעת.

In self-help books, they talk about the tool to visualize an upcoming challenge in preparation for it. Emergency responders and athletes do this in their training to experience it in their minds beforehand. It then becomes like a second run when the challenge actually comes. R. Shimshon Pincus talks about this as well in relation to *Leil Haseder*.

These are all tools and ideas to keep סיפור יציאת מצרים real and alive when we are at the *Seder*.

We are really describing two halves of the *avodah*. The first half is יצא ממצרים לראות עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים, to see ourselves as having left Mitzrayim. The second half is the *hakoras hatov* we have to feel.

*Hakoras Hatov* is a muscle that we can exercise all year round. If we do so throughout the year then we'll realize it on *Leil Pesach* so much more than if we just come to it for the *Seder*. R. Pam used to say that if we can imagine a society where *hakoras hatov* was present on every level, between husband and wife, parents and children, *kehila* and *rov*, *mosdos hachinuch* and their alumni, then we would be living on such an elevated level.

We should be *zoche* to some level of יצא ממצרים and the accompanying *hakoras hatov* which will bring us to new levels of *keshet* קודש אבריק הוא. With this, *b'ezras Hashem*, we'll be *zoche* to Moshiach. חג כשר ושמח!