

KOL TODA



Gateways to Gratitude: Giving Thanks to Hashem

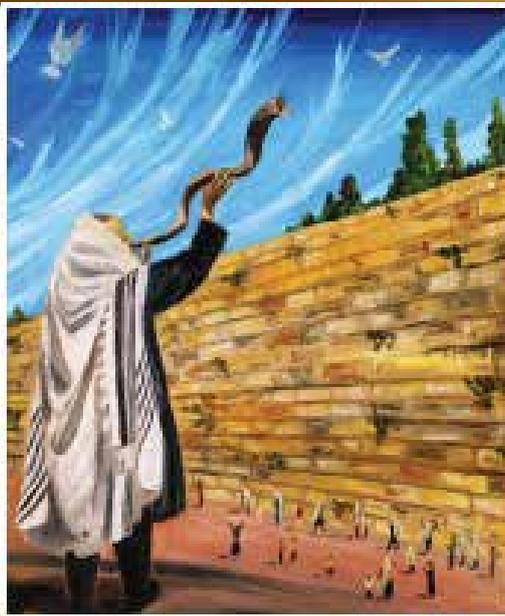
AV - THE MONTH OF GRATITUDE

Av is the fifth month of the Jewish calendar. The number five is very much connected to gratitude to Hashem. Yirmiyahu speaks of five "Kolos" — five emanations of K'vod Shomayim — that will be revealed with the final geula. The fifth kol is gratitude to Hashem: "The kol of joy and the kol of gladness, the kol of a bridegroom and the kol of a bride, the kol of those saying, 'Thank Hashem Master of Hosts, for Hashem is good, for His kindness is forever,' bringing a thanksgiving offering to the House of Hashem" (Yirmiyahu 33:11). This posuk is familiar to us, as it is mentioned and sung at wedding celebrations where Chazal teach us these five "kolos" are also present.

Rabbi Yosef Engel zt"l (Otzrot Yosef, Drush 8) writes extensively about this fifth kol. He says that the number five is closely related to gratitude to Hashem. For example, the middah of "Hod", which alludes to "hodayah" - gratefulness, is the fifth middah mentioned in the passuk in Divrei Hayamim: "Yours, Hashem, Is the greatness, and the might, and the splendor, and the triumph, and the Hod, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is Yours" (I:29,11). The attribute of Hod is, according to the Zohar, the expression of Hashem's goodness as it becomes apparent

through gratitude.

Another source is Pirkei Avot (6:10): "Hashem acquired five acquisitions in His world. These are: the Torah, the heavens and the earth, Abraham, the people of Israel, and the Beis Hamikdash." The Beis Hamikdash, the fifth acquisition, is the place



designated for expressing and demonstrating thanks to Hashem as Chazal tell us in the Gemara (Brachos 58a): "Hod - that is the Beis Hamikdash".

Also, the Shir Shel Yom of Thursday contains Yosef's name with a surprising addition: he is called "Yehosef". We are told that the letter Hey (numerically equivalent to the

number five) added to his name is to show that he offered thanks to Hashem when he was released from the Egyptian prison. One of those obligated to thank Hashem when coming out of danger, is a person who is released from prison. The letter Hey was added to his name, reflecting the gratitude he felt at that time.

It is also interesting to note that Mizmor LeToda, (Tehillim Ch. 100), the chapter of gratitude, has exactly five pesukim.

Rabbi Engel writes, the "the fifth kol" of the posuk in Yirmiyahu, is the culmination of the four others mentioned beforehand and their goal. The objective of all joy in this world is to arouse us to feel heartfelt gratitude to Hashem.

As we see from this posuk in Yirmiyahu, the final redemption will be permeated with the sound of thankfulness to Hashem. It will burst forth from hearts overflowing with elated gratitude. This is the uplifting appreciation we yearn and pray for. The lack of this elevated level of gratitude is what we are mourning for in this month of Av.

Why Five?

What is the connection between the number five and gratitude? Rabbi Engel zt"l quotes the Gemara in Shabbos 104a where Chazal discuss the

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symbolic meaning of the Hebrew letters. The letter Hey, which has the numerical value of five, says the Gemara, symbolizes Hashem's name. Someone who thanks Hashem expresses his awareness that all the outstanding kindnesses we experience in this world come from Hashem. On the other hand, someone who is not grateful, essentially attributes the goodness to nature and chance, thereby stemming any possibility of feeling gratitude to Hashem.

The Month of Av the Fifth Month

In the fifth month, we mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. The Beis Hamikdash was where we gathered to express our gratitude as is described in Tehilim (122): "For

there the tribes ascended ... to give thanks to the Name of Hashem." Not surprisingly, the attribute of Aaron Hakohen and his sons, who served in the Beis Hamikdash is Hod, the trait of expressing thankfulness to Hashem. Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, the famous 12th century liturgist, calls the Beis Hamikdash "Beit Hodi" in his famous liturgy recited customarily at bris milah celebrations.

Aaron Hakohen, the embodiment of the middah of Hod, passed away on the first day of the month. The Sefas Emes writes that Hashem arranged for his Yahrtzeit to be in the same month as the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, in order that his merit aid it's rebuilding, may it be speedily in our times.

From this we see that the attribute of thankfulness, the characteris-

tic of Aaron Hakohen, is a vital ingredient necessary to provide the merit for rebuilding the Beis Hamikdash, the place where we will experience stirring, elevating gratitude, far above anything we are able to achieve today. Thus, if we make an effort to express gratitude to Hashem to the maximum of our ability already now, He will grant us the possibility to achieve an even greater level of appreciation within the spiritual elevated atmosphere of a newly rebuilt Beis Hamikdash.

Rabbi Zadok Hakohen of Lublin reveals a most interesting fact. He writes that the reason for the special joyous significance of the fifteenth of Av is because on this day the third Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt, as is hinted in the Mishna is Ta'anis (4:5). May Hashem grant that it be already this year. Amen.



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TZADDIKIM THANK HASHEM

The Steipler once told Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky zt"l: "Reb Yaakov, life-trials cannot be bought with money. The tremendous value of life's difficulties is beyond evaluation! Indeed, we pray for hardships not to come, but that prayer is only for the future. Those troubles that we have already successfully endured are an eternal achievement, more precious than all the money in the world!"

Rabbi Shmuel Huminer suffered for many months from a most severe terminal illness. As his situation deteriorated, the family members surrounding his bed could not contain the dismay. But Rav Shmuel lay there, his face radiating joy and happiness. "Oh, how wonderful ...! Such happiness...!" he remarked.

"Joy? Happiness?!" his family asked with disbelief.

"I didn't make this up myself," said Reb Shmuel. "It says so in the Shulchan Aruch: "Troubles for servants of Hashem is for them a source of joy and considered by them goodness, for by accepting the difficulty that

Hashem sends them with love they are serving Hashem, which is for them a cause for happiness."

Then Rav Shmuel went on to explain in detail the mitzvos that someone fulfills when he accepts painful experiences with love:

1. "You shall know in your heart, that just as a man chastises his son, so does Hashem chastise you." (Devarim 8:5)
2. "My son, despise not the discipline of Hashem" (Mishlei 3:11)
3. "And do not abhor His chastening" (ibid)
4. The mitzva of trust in Hashem:
 - "Trust in Hashem forever" (Yeshayahu 26:4)
 - "Here is the God of my salvation, I shall trust and not fear." (Yeshayahu 12:2)
 - "Trust in Him at all times" (Tehilim 62:9).

Is there any greater goodness than this?

(From "The Notebook of a King's Servant")

A Word of Gratitude

"The whole world was created to provide the opportunity for man to acknowledge Hashem's kindness, praise Him, and not remain ungrateful. This is the foundation upon which the entire Torah is based."
[Alshich, Ki Savo]

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