

THE FACE WE SHOW

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week's parsha, Tzav, deals predominantly with different karbanos [sacrifices] that were brought.

"And these are the instructions for the peace-offerings which one may offer to Hashem. If as a 'Todah' [Thanksgiving Offering] he will offer it, then he shall bring with the sacrifice, cakes of matzo mixed with oil... [7:10-12]"

This Korbon Todah [Thanksgiving Offering] was brought by one who was saved from a perilous situation. This includes four categories: those who traveled overseas, those who traveled through the wilderness, those who were released from prison and those who were healed from a serious illness. This karbon demonstrates the appreciation they feel to Hashem for His deliverance.

The word 'todah' has two seemingly disparate meanings. The very common use is as an expression of thanks. It also means an admission. 'Hoda'as (the same root as todah) ba'al din' is the admission of one side to the claims that another side made against it.

Rav Huttner zt"l explains that the common word that these two concepts share, reveals the common foundation that they are based upon.

We like to feel that we are independent--self-made men. We have only ourselves to thank for reaching the point we're at. We might pay lip-service to "all those without whom it would have been impossible for me to be standing here tonight to receive this honor" but deep down we feel most comfortable when it's our own back that we are patting.

An honest 'thank you' is in fact an admission. It's the first installment on a debt of gratitude. I admit that I couldn't have done it without you and I therefore thank you.

We can determine if the todah is 'admission' or 'thanks' based on the wording that follows it. An admission is followed by the word that [the Hebrew prefix of sh']--I admit that... Thanks, on the other hand, is followed by that which we are thanking for [in Hebrew, oll]--thanks for...

With this Rav Huttner zt"l explains the wording in the Modim [Appreciation] part of the silent Amidah prayer [the Shmone Esrei]. The Modim prayer begins: Modim anachnu lach she'atah hu Elokainu--we admit that you are our G-d of Power. It then continues: Nodeh l'cha ol chayeinu--we thank you for our lives that are in Your hands.

As such, the Korbon Todah (upon which the Modim section of the Amidah prayer is based) encompasses both of these aspects. The karbon is a statement of gratitude that demonstrates the

recognition and admission that we have only Hashem to thank for our deliverance.

How does this sacrifice, to the degree that it's possible, pay Hashem back for what He has done for us?

There are a number of distinct laws that apply to the Korbon Todah. The Talmud [Menachos 76] teaches that ten loaves were brought from each of the four types of bread/matzo that the passuk [verse] [7:12-13] mentions. Furthermore, whereas one has a two-day period to consume a regular Korbon Shlomim [Peace Offering], the Korbon Todah [Thanksgiving Offering] and its forty loaves must be completely eaten on the day it is brought.

The N'tziv writes that this expansive obligation to bring forty loaves of bread/matzo on one hand, and, at the same time, the diminished one-day time period within which it must be eaten, forces a person to invite a large number of people to share this seudah [festive meal]. This meal will then lead to the purpose of this Korbon Todah--the public proclamation and voicing of gratitude to Hashem for all that He has done for us.

The way to pay Hashem back is by teaching others to appreciate Him and to thereby sanctify His name.

It always bugs me when I hear someone respond "not bad" to the common question of "how are you?" Not bad... In other words, when I rate how Hashem is doing in His job of running the world He gets a solid 65. Not bad. Room for improvement but clearly a strong effort... When a person looks honestly at all that Hashem has done and is doing for him, even when there are difficulties, illnesses, etc. that one is dealing with, his response should be "fantastic, thank G-d!"

But the truth is, even more important than what we say is the face we show the world. The face and expression that we wear is our present-day Korbon Todah. It should show happiness and appreciation for all that Hashem has granted us and should thereby sanctify Hashem's name.

Good Shabbos,
Yisroel Ciner

This is dedicated to the zchus of my mother, a"h, Miriam bas Aharon Aryeh, whose yahrtzeit is this Shabbos, yud Nissan. TNZB"H

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