

TAKING OUT THE GARBAGE

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion: Tape #92, Selling Non-Kosher Foods. Good Shabbos!

Double Entendre In the Word "Hoda'ah"

Among the sacrifices mentioned in this week's parsha is the Thanksgiving Offering. The Medrash tells us that in the future all the sacrifices will be nullified, except the Thanksgiving Offering -- for there is always need to give thanks.

Rav Hutner z"tl, makes a very interesting point. "Todah" (thanks) comes from the word "Hoda'ah", meaning giving thanks. However, the word "Hoda'ah" also means to admit (as in the expression Hoda'as ba'al din k'meah edim dami).

Rav Hutner says that it is no coincidence that the word for thanking and the word for admitting are one and the same. In order for a person to give thanks, he has to be able to admit that he needed help. The first step in being grateful to someone for doing something for you is the admission that you needed help and that you are not all powerful. Therefore the Hebrew word for thanks and for admission are the same.

How do we know whether the word "Hoda'ah" means admission or thanks? Rav Hutner says that we need to look at the preposition that comes after the word. The word "Hoda'ah" -- meaning admission -- is always followed by the Hebrew preposition "sheh..." (that). The word "Hoda'ah" -- meaning thanks -- is always followed by the Hebrew word "al ..." (for).

In davening [prayers] we have a Blessing of Modim, called the Blessing of "Hoda'ah". How does it read? "Modim anachnu lach sheh..." This indicates, that the first thing we have to do is not thank G-d, but admit to G-d that we are dependent on Him. Once we come to that understanding, then we can come to the end of the blessing where we say "Nodeh lecha... ..al..." -- We thank You for... Birkas HaHoda'ah is thus a two-stage blessing. It is a Hoda'ah of admission at the beginning which climaxes with a Hoda'ah of thanking at the end.

We Can't Appoint an Agent to Say 'Thank-You'

I recently saw a beautiful insight in the Avudraham. When the Chazan says Modim, the congregation recites a prayer known as "The Rabbis' Modim". Why is that? The Avudraham says that for all blessings in the Shmoneh Esrei we can have an agent. For 'Heal Us', for 'Bless Us with a Good Year', and so forth we can have a messenger -- the Shliach Tzibbur can say the blessing for us. However, there is one thing that no else one can say for us. We must say it for ourselves. That one thing is "Thank You". Hoda'ah has to come from ourselves. No one can be our agent to say 'Thank You'.

Glossary

Korban Olah -- Burnt Offering

Seudah Hamafsekes -- The meal of termination (of eating), prior to the fast.

Kittel -- white robe worn by married men on Yom Kippur (by some on Rosh Hashana as well)

Ani -- poor person

Hoda'as ba'al din k'meah edim dami-- An admission of a litigant is like one hundred witnesses

Shliach Tzibbur -- the agent of the congregation (chazzan)

Personalities & Sources:

Chovos Halevovos -- Duties of the Heart; authored by R. Bachye Ibn Paquda in 11th century Spain. Originally written in Arabic and translated into Hebrew by R. Judah ibn Tibbon in 12th century.

Rav Yitzchok Hutner -- (1907-1980) Rosh Yeshiva of Mesifita Chaim Berlin in New York.

Avudraham -- classic work written in 1450 by R. Dovid ben Yosef (1420-1494) on laws and commentary on prayers. Author was student of Ba'al HaTurim (R. Yaakov ben Asher) and was a rabbi in Seville.

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (#3). The corresponding halachic portion for this tape is: #92 is: Selling Non-Kosher Foods. The other halachic portions for Parshas Tzav from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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Also Available: Mesorah / Artscroll has published a collection of Rabbi Frand's essays. The book is entitled:

Rabbi Yissocher Frand: In Print

and is available through Project Genesis On-Line Bookstore: <http://books.torah.org/>
