

The Mitzvah to Bring Bikkurim Is an Expression of “Hakaras Tovah” to Hashem and Is a Tikun for the Cheit Eitz HaDa’as which Was a Denial of Hashem’s Tovah

In this week’s parsha, parshas Ki Savo, we learn of the mitzvah to bring a minchah of “bikkurim” to Hashem in the Beis HaMikdash. It is described as one of the mitzvos for which HKB”H created the world. The Midrash expresses this fact as follows (B.R. 1, 4) regarding the passuk (Bereishis 1, 1): **“בראשית ברא” אלקים, ואין ראשית אלא ביכורים, שנאמר (שמות כג-יט) ראשית ביכורי אדמתך “בראשית ברא”—there is no “reishis” other than “bikkurim,” as it states (Shemos 23, 19): “The ‘reishis’ of the first fruits (bikkurim) of your land you shall bring to the house of Hashem, your G-d.”**

Therefore, it is only fitting that we explore the great significance of the mitzvah of “bikkurim”—for which the world was created. We shall begin by citing the pesukim in the passage of “bikkurim” (Devarim 26, 1):

“והיה כי תבוא אל הארץ אשר ה’ אלקיך נותן לך נחלה וירשתה וישבת בה, ולקחת מראשית כל פרי האדמה אשר תביא מארצך אשר ה’ אלקיך נותן לך ושמט בטנא, והלכת אל המקום אשר יבחר ה’ אלקיך לשכן שמו שם, ובאת אל הכהן אשר יהיה בימים ההם ואמרת אליו, הגדתי היום לה’ אלקיך כי באתי אל הארץ אשר נשבע ה’ לאבותינו לתת לנו, ולקח הכהן הטנא מידך והניחו לפני מזבח ה’ אלקיך.”

“It will be when you enter the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you as an inheritance, and you take possession of it, and dwell in it, that you shall take of the first of every fruit of the ground that you bring in from your land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that Hashem, your G-d, will choose, to make His name rest there. You shall come to the Kohen who will be in those days, and you shall say to him, ‘I declare today to Hashem, your G-d, that I have come to the land that Hashem swore to our forefathers to give us.’ The Kohen shall take the basket from your hand, and lay it before the mizbeiach of Hashem, your G-d.”

Based on a source in Maseches Bikkurim (3, 1), Rashi comments: **“A man goes down into his field and sees a fig that**

has begun to ripen; he wraps a reed-grass around it as a sign, and declares: “This is hereby bikkurim.”” I saw an interesting insight in the sefer Ohalei Shem, authored by the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shem Klingberg, ztz”l, hy”d. The Mishnah teaches us (ibid.) that “bikkurim” are only brought from the seven species—“shivas haminim.” So, from all the seven species, why did our blessed sages choose only to mention a fig that ripened as an example?

He explains that bringing a minchah of “bikkurim” serves as tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.” According to one opinion in the Gemara (Berachos 40a), the forbidden fruit was a fig: **“אילן שאכל ממנו אדם הראשון... רבי נחמיה אומר תאנה היתה, שבדבר שנתקלקלו בו ויתפרו עלה תאנה”**. Rabbi Nechemiah is of the opinion that the tree from which Adam HaRishon ate was a fig tree. For, it states subsequently (Bereishis 3, 7) that they sewed together a fig leaf to cover up their nakedness. Thus, it stands to reason that the remedy came from the same source as the transgression—the fig tree. This being the case, we must endeavor to understand how bringing a minchah of “bikkurim” constitutes a tikun for the “cheit Eitz HaDa’as.”

The Principle of “Hakaras HaTov”

Chazal teach us that these pesukim describing the mitzvah of bringing “bikkurim” reveal a fundamental principle regarding the relationship between human beings made of flesh and blood and HKB”H. It is essential that man not be an ingrate (“kifui tovah”); he must recognize and be grateful for all the good bestowed upon him by HKB”H. We learn this vital fact from the following. The passuk (ibid. 3) states: **“You shall come to the Kohen who will be in those days, and you shall say to him . . .”** Rashi explains based on the Sifri: **“ואמרת אליו, שאינך כפוי טובה”**—**and you shall declare to the Kohen that you are not a “kifui tovah”—that you are not ungrateful for what you have received from Hashem.**

It is evident, therefore, that this mitzvah is founded on the principle of “Hakaras tovah” to HKB”H—recognizing and being grateful to HKB”H for His kindness—for bringing the rains in a timely fashion and for the resultant fruits that were produced. It is worthwhile presenting what the commentaries explain regarding Rashi’s comment: **“A man goes down into his field and sees a fig that has begun to ripen; he wraps a reed-grass around it as a sign, and declares: ‘This is hereby bikkurim.’”** Upon seeing a fig begin to ripen, a person is very likely, chas v’shalom, to credit his own efforts and labor for the successful produce. After all, he plowed the land, planted the trees, and cleared away the thorns. This is a perfect example of (Devarim 8, 17): **“ואמרת בלבבך כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה”**—**thinking to yourself: “My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth.”**

Therefore, our blessed sages devised a brilliant plan. We make a sign to remind us of the imperative (ibid. 18): **“וזכרת את ה' אלקיך כי הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל”**—**you shall remember Hashem, your G-d; it was He who gave you strength to make wealth.** This then is the symbolism inherent in tying the “גמי”, the reed around the ripening fruit as a sign. For, the word “גמי” can be viewed as an acronym for (Tehillim 111, 2): **“ג'דולים מ'עשה י'י”**—**great are the deeds of Hashem.** This sign reminds us to recognize and be grateful for Hashem’s kindness and favor. He created the entire universe; he allows the rain to fall and causes the fruit to grow.

The Purpose of Creation Is to Recognize the Creator’s Kindness

Based on this fundamental principle, the Alshich hakadosh (at the beginning of our parsha) interprets the Midrash mentioned at the beginning of this essay: **“בראשית ברא אלקים, ואין ראשית אלא”**—**ביכורים**—which suggests that the world was only created for the sake of the mitzvah of “bikkurim.” This causes the Alshich to ponder: **“כי הלא יפלא מה גדלה המצוה הזאת שעליה לבדה נברא העולם”**—why is this mitzvah so significant that the world was created for its sake alone? Here is an excerpt from his wonderful explanation:

“אך הנה ידוע כי (תהלים פט-ג) עולם חסד יבנה... אמנם זה חסדו יתברך חפץ להיטיב, ולא יבקש מידינו להחשיב עולמו כאילו הוא לנו, רק שנחזיק לו יתברך טובה, ונכיר כי הוא אדון הכל, והוא הטוב והמטיב לנו תמיד, ונברך ונהלל לו יתברך... והן זאת כוונתו יתברך במצוה הזאת, כי הלא כי יראה האדם עצמו בארץ זבת חלב ודבש, שמן ודשן תחת גפנו ותחת תאנתו ואין מחריד, בתים מלאים כל טוב אשר לא מילא, כרמים וזיתים אשר לא נטע, חיטה ושעורה לרוב מאד, הלא ידיחנו יצרו בשרירות לבו לאמר (דברים ח-יז) כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה...”

על כן צוה לנו יתברך, ניקח מראשית כל פרי האדמה, ונשים בטנא ונוליך עד מקום כבודו יתברך, כאומרים לפניו יתברך, לא לנו ה' לא לנו כי הכל שלך, ולהורות כי ממנו

יתברך הכל, הנה ראשיתו נביא בטנא לפני כסא כבודו, כאשר יובא לפני בעל הכרם, ואז הוא יתברך ונתן את הכל באמונה ובמתנה על ידי היותו בלתי כפוי טובה.”

It states in Tehillim (89, 3): **“The world is built on kindness.”** In truth, this refers to the Blessed One’s kindness—His desire to be benevolent. He does not want us to view this world as if it is ours; rather, we must be grateful for His kindness, recognize that He is the master of everything, He always does what is best for us; as such, we should bless and praise Him. This is the divine purpose of this mitzvah. For, when a person sees himself in a land flowing with milk and honey, secure, with houses full of all forms of bounty which he did not procure, vineyards and olives which he did not plant, plentiful wheat and barley, his yetzer will entice him to think: **“My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth.”**

Therefore, the Blessed One commanded us to take the first of all the land’s fruit, place it in a basket and transport it to His hallowed place. There we shall declare that everything is His and not ours. We will bring His first fruit to Him in a basket indicating that He is the owner of the vineyard. Then He will give us everything in good faith as a present.

Thus, it is fitting that we examine the magnificent concept of recognizing Hashem’s kindness—“Hakaras hatov.” As we shall explain, this is the basis of the entire Torah. Not only must we must appreciate the kindness and favor HKB”H bestows upon us daily, but we must also acknowledge the kindness performed by every fellow human being on our behalf. Anyone, who fails to recognize the favor of his fellow man, will ultimately fail to recognize the kindness and favor of the Almighty.

“Deveikus” in Hashem Hinges on the Awareness that We Are Dependent on Him

Upon further consideration, we realize that this important principle—that it is our obligation to express our gratitude to HKB”H—coincides beautifully with HKB”H’s statement delivered by the prophet (Yeshayah 43, 21): **“עם זו יצרתי לי תהילתי יספרו”**—**I fashioned this people for Myself, to sing My praise.** We see that the purpose of creation is that Yisrael should speak the praises of Hashem. In this manner, we express our recognition of the debt of gratitude we owe Hashem for all of the kindness and mercy He has shown us.

Notwithstanding, it is now incumbent upon us to reconcile an apparent incongruity. What is the significance of the statement: **“I fashioned this people for Myself, to sing My praise”?**

Surely, we cannot accept this statement at face value. Surely, HKB”H, the Master of the Universe, does not require the praise and recognition of lowly creatures of flesh and blood.

Let us explain the matter based on the following Gemara (Makkos 24a): “שש מאות ושלוש עשרה מצוות נאמרו לו למשה... בא — חבקות והעמידן על אחת שנאמר (חבקות ב ד) וצדיק באמונתו יחיה” **613 mitzvos were given to Moshe . . . Chabakuk came along and incorporated them into one, as it is said (Chabakuk 2, 4), “but the righteous person shall live through his faith.”**

In Chidushei Aggados (ibid.) and in Tiferes Yisrael (Chapter 55), the Maharal of Prague provides the following clarification: “כי על ידי אמונה יש לאדם דביקות בו יתברך, כי אין עצם האמונה רק הדביקות בו יתברך, שהוא מאמין —faith, “emunah,” allows a person to connect with the Holy One; the essence of “emunah” is being connected with Him; a person has faith in G-d and, thus, is connected with Him.

The Maharal’s statement can be understood in light of a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh (Vayishlach 170b). HKB”H gave us 248 mitzvos “aseh,” positive commandments, corresponding to the 248 limbs and organs in the human body; he also gave us 365 mitzvos “lo ta’aseh” corresponding to the 365 sinews in the human body. This indicates that the purpose of performing the 613 total mitzvos is to connect our entire physical being—limbs, organs and sinews—with HKB”H, Who gave us the Torah.

In this manner, we can understand the statement that Chabakuk incorporated all of the 613 mitzvos into one basic principle—“emunah” in Hashem. Seeing as the purpose of performing all of the mitzvos is to ensure that we are connected with Hashem, in effect, the basis for all of the mitzvos is “emunah” in Hashem. We must have faith that all of our needs and sustenance come solely from the Holy One. This belief keeps a person connected with Hashem at all times.

How nicely this explains the phraseology: “וצדיק באמונתו יחיה” -- **“but the righteous person shall live through his faith.”** Through “emunah,” faith, we merit staying connected with Hashem, the source of life. The passuk spells it out very clearly (Devarim 4, 4): **“ואתם הדבקים בה’ אלקיכם חיים כולכם היום” — but you who are connected with Hashem, your G-d, you all remain alive today.** Seeing as being connected to Hashem—“Deveikus b’Hashem”—is a conduit of life, therefore, regarding “emunah” in Hashem, which accomplishes this connection, it states: “וצדיק באמונתו יחיה”.

We can now shed some light on the issue discussed above. We asked why HKB”H requires the deeds and praise of lowly creatures of flesh and blood for the sake of His honor. HKB”H

created Yisrael to perform His mitzvos and to sing His praises for their own good. For, by praising Hashem for every kindness and favor He bestows upon us daily, we remain connected and attached to Him, fulfilling the dictum: **“ואתם הדבקים בה’ אלקיכם חיים -- but you who are connected with Hashem, your G-d, you all remain alive today.**

The Association between the Minchah of “Bikkurim” and Lavan HaArami and the Galus in Mitzrayim

Let us begin by addressing the surprising comment made by Rashi in the name of the Sifri regarding the passuk: **“You shall come to the Kohen who will be in those days, and you shall say to him . . .”**; Rashi comments that the person declares to the Kohen that he is not a “kifui tovah”—an ingrate. The problem, however, is that we do not find any allusion in the passuk to the notion of such a denial.

It appears that our sages derived this fact from the continuation of the passage. The Torah specifies the things that one who brings “bikkurim” must pronounce in the presence of Hashem (Devarim 26, 5):

“וענית ואמרת לפני ה’ אלקיך, ארמי אובד אבי וירד מצרימה... וירעו אותנו המצרים ויענונו ויתנו עלינו עבודה קשה, ונצעק אל ה’ אלקי אבותינו, וישמע ה’ את קולנו, וירא את ענינו ואת עמלנו ואת לחצנו, ויוציאנו ה’ ממצרים ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובמורא גדול ובאותות ובמופתים, ויביאנו אל המקום הזה ויתן לנו את הארץ הזאת ארץ זבת חלב ודבש, ועתה הנה הבאתי את ראשית פרי האדמה אשר נתת לי ה”.

Then you shall call out and say before Hashem, your G-d, “An Arami would have destroyed my father, and he descended to Mitzrayim and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation—great, strong and numerous. The Egyptians mistreated us and afflicted us, and placed hard work upon us. Then we cried out to Hashem, the G-d of our forefathers, and Hashem heard our voice and saw our affliction, our travail, and our oppression. Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great awesomeness, and with signs and with wonders. He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold! I have brought the first fruit of the ground that You have given me, Hashem!”

At first glance, this declaration is extremely surprising. Most certainly, one who brings “bikkurim” is obligated to thank and praise Hashem for giving us the land in order to eat of its fruit

ומברכתו של יעקב ואילך היה פרעה בא אל נילוס, והוא עולה לקראתו ומשקה את הארץ—**what berachah did he bestow upon him? That the Nile should rise to his feet. For, the land of Mitzrayim is not watered with rainwater; rather, the Nile rises and irrigates it. And from Yaakov's berachah and onward, Pharaoh would come to the Nile, and it would rise toward him and irrigate the land.** Yet, after Yaakov passed away, Pharaoh demonstrated a lack of gratitude for Yaakov's berachah; he embittered the lives of Yaakov's offspring, Bnei Yisrael, by subjecting them to difficult labor.

Fulfilling All the Mitzvos of the Torah Due to “Hakaras HaTov” to HKB”H

Now, based on what we have just learned, we can begin to appreciate why HKB”H began the Aseret HaDibrot with the commandment of (Shemos 20, 2): **אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים—I am Hashem, your G-d, who took you out of the land of Mitzrayim.** Rashi comments in the name of the Mechilta: **כדאי היא ההוצאה שתהיו משועבדים לי—taking you out of Mitzrayim is sufficient reason for you to be subservient to Me.** This teaches us an incredible chiddush. The source of our obligation to fulfill all the mitzvos of the Torah stems from the “Hakaras hatov” we owe HKB”H for taking us out of Mitzrayim.

As we have shown, Pharaoh and the Egyptians demonstrated a tremendous lack of gratitude toward Yaakov Avinu and Yosef HaTzaddik. Hence, so long as Yisrael were mired in Mitzrayim and associated with them, they ran the risk of being affected by their lack of “Hakaras hatov.”

Therefore, HKB”H impressed upon them: **אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים—that He had extracted them both physically and spiritually from the tumah of Mitzrayim.** For this, they owed Him a sense of “Hakaras hatov”—a debt of gratitude. Accordingly, it was fitting that they be subservient to Him and obligated to observe all of His mitzvos.

This enlightens us with regards to the pronouncement made over the minchah of the “bikkurim”: **ארמי אוכל אבי—Lavan wished to kill Yaakov, demonstrating that he was a “kifui tovah”—denying that he had been blessed because of Yaakov. וירד—subsequently, he descended to Mitzrayim; they also demonstrated a lack of gratitude toward Yosef, as reflected by the Torah's narrative: “The Egyptians mistreated us and afflicted us, and placed hard work upon us. . . Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, with great awesomeness, and with signs and with wonders. He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land, a land**

flowing with milk and honey.” Therefore, we are obligated to demonstrate our gratitude to HKB”H, and not behave like Lavan and the Egyptians, who failed to demonstrate their gratitude.

It is precisely for this reason: **ועתה הנה הבאתי את ראשית פרי האדמה אשר נתתה לי ה'—that we now bring the first fruit of the land Hashem gave us to Him—in recognition of our debt of gratitude, “Hakaras tovah,” to Hashem.** In this manner, Chazal deduced that the passuk prior to the pronouncement of the passage of “bikkurim”: **ובאת אל הכהן אשר יהיה בימים ההם ואמרת אליו—**indicates that one must declare to the Kohen that one is not a “kifui tovah,” an ingrate, like Lavan and the Egyptians.

Adam HaRishon Displayed a Lack of Gratitude

Following this line of reasoning, let us attempt to explain why HKB”H commanded us to express our “Hakaras hatov” specifically here with regards to the fruit of the land. Furthermore, we are commanded to do so in thought, speech and deed. In deed, by bringing the minchah of “bikkurim” to Hashem; in speech, by making a pronouncement over the “bikkurim”; and with this declaration, we reveal our thought and mindset that we are not ungrateful. As we do so, we recognize that the first case of “kifui tovah” in the world occurred with Adam HaRishon and the first sin, the partaking of the “Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa.”

This is evident from the question HKB”H asks Adam HaRishon after the sin (Bereishis 3, 11): **ויאמר מי הגיד לך כי עירום אתה, המן העץ אשר צויתיך לבלתי אכל ממנו אכלת, ויאמר האדם האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה—and He said, “Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree—and I ate.”** Rashi comments: **כאן—here he demonstrated that he was ungrateful.**

This notion is founded on the following Gemara (A.Z. 5a): **אמר להן משה לישראל, כפויי טובה בני כפויי טובה - כפויי טובה, דכתיב (במדבר כא-ה) ונפשנו קצה בלחם הקלוקל, בני כפויי טובה, דכתיב האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה. Moshe reprimands Yisrael for being “ingrates, the descendants of an ingrate” after they complain about the “mahn”. The Gemara cites the passuk above (Bereishis 3, 12) as proof that Adam HaRishon was ungrateful and lacked appreciation for HKB”H's favor. As Rashi explains: **אשר נתתה עמדי, לשון גנאי הוא, -- שתולה הקלקלה במתנתו של מקום והוא עשאה לו לעזר—** Adam's remark: **“whom You gave to be with me,”** was uttered disrespectfully and defiantly; he was blaming his transgression and his shortcoming on the gift the Omnipresent had given him—the woman he had been given to assist him and be his companion.**

The entire scenario is difficult to comprehend. Adam's claim that the woman had offered him the fruit to eat was truthful. So, why do our blessed sages accuse him of being ungrateful based on this remark? The truth of the matter is to be found in HKB"H's statement describing the nature and purpose for the creation of the woman (ibid. 2, 18): "אעשה לו עזר כנגדו"-- **I will make him a helper against him.** Undoubtedly, HKB"H created woman with the characteristics and abilities to assist her husband—to be an "eizer". So, how is it even conceivable that this woman, created to assist him in his life's mission, actually caused him to fail by partaking of the forbidden fruit? Yet, the description "eizer k'negdo" contains two contradictory terms; for, one who is a helper is not against him and, vice-versa, one who is an adversary is not a helper. As Rashi explains: "זכה עזר, לא זכה כנגדו"—if man is fortunate and meritorious, she will be an "eizer", a helper; however, if he is not meritorious, she will be "k'negdo", against him—an adversary. HKB"H is conveying the message that the reality and outcome depend solely on man himself. If he strives to engage in Torah study and to serve Hashem, his wife will be an "eizer"—assisting him to serve Hashem. If, however, he does not endeavor to study Torah and to serve Hashem, not only will she not be an "eizer", she will, in fact, be a "k'negdo"—opposing him and leading to his ultimate failure.

Hence, we can draw the following conclusion. Since Chava—Adam's "eizer k'negdo—not only did not help Adam, but actually caused him to sin with the Eitz HaDa'as, this proves conclusively that he was not meritorious; hence: "לא זכה כנגדו"—she acted as an adversary precipitating his downfall. It was due to his own shortcomings that he fell into the yetzer's trap and ate from the Eitz HaDa'as. Had he been resolute and committed to observe Hashem's command not to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as: (a) he would not have been swayed by his wife's suggestion and, furthermore (b) he would have supported her and prepared her not to converse with the nachash, so as not to fall into its trap. Since he did not do so, it is evident that he himself deserved to sin. Thus, his claim: "האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל"—that the woman G-d gave him caused him to eat from the tree, was unfounded. Based on this understanding, Chazal deduced from his remark, as Rashi points out: "כאן כבר בטובה"—that he was ungrateful for what G-d had given him.

Lack of Gratitude Led to the "Cheit Eitz HaDa'as"

Notwithstanding, the matter still deserves further explanation. Why did our blessed sages see fit to teach us that Adam HaRishon was ungrateful for the favor HKB"H showed him? Even disregarding

this insolent comment, his guilt was enormous; by eating from the Eitz HaDa'as, he disregarded a direct command from Hashem. So, what benefit is served by adding that he also demonstrated a lack of gratitude for HKB"H's favor?

It seems quite clear, that with their vast wisdom, they wished to teach us what lay at the root of Adam HaRishon's rebellion and ultimate downfall. The Noam Elimelech (Shoftim) notes what we have learned in the Gemara (A.Z. 45b). If a person wishes to uproot a form of "avodah zarah": "צריך לשרש אחריה"—he must search for the source of the improper thought; what caused him to transgress one of Hashem's commands?

Therefore, they point out that when HKB"H confronted Adam and held him accountable for eating from the Eitz HaDa'as, Adam HaRishon himself unwittingly revealed the source of the sin. As we have seen, he attempted futilely to defend his actions by claiming: "האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל"—that he was led astray by the woman G-d gave him. This remark demonstrates to us that he was ungrateful. Furthermore, it reveals to us the source of the sin; Adam HaRishon failed to appreciate and express his gratitude to HKB"H.

Let us explain. The Torah states explicitly (ibid. 2, 8): 'ויטע ה' אלקים גן בעדן מקדם וישם שם את האדם אשר יצר, ויצמח ה' אלקים מן האדמה כל עץ Hashem G-d planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed. And Hashem G-d caused to grow from the ground every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food; also the Eitz HaChaim in the midst of the garden, and the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa. We learn that HKB"H placed Adam HaRishon in the most incredible and exalted place in all of creation. Everything was ready and prepared for him; it was perfect. Every tree was aesthetically pleasing and good to eat. There was no need to expend energy plowing or planting.

Upon placing Adam in Gan Eden, HKB"H instructed him as to what was permissible and what was prohibited (ibid. 16): 'ויצו ה' אלקים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל, ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו—and Hashem G-d commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die." In other words, HKB"H gave him permission to eat from all of the thousands of trees in the garden with the exception of one; HKB"H specifically warned him not to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa. So, had Adam HaRishon demonstrated "Hakaras hatov" to HKB"H for making all of the trees of the garden available to him without the

need to exert himself, he would not have fallen into the nachash's trap. Instead of being persuaded to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as, he would have dismissed the nachash with shame and dishonor.

However, Adam HaRishon did not recognize his debt of gratitude to HKB"H sufficiently. This unfortunate fact was revealed when HKB"H demanded that he be held accountable for violating Hashem's will. Yet, rather than accepting responsibility for his actions and admitting that he had sinned and transgressed, he chose to place the blame on his wife. Additionally, he hinted to the fact that HKB"H was somewhat to blame for giving him such a woman by remarking: **"האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל—the woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."**

Therefore, our blessed sages reveal that Adam HaRishon wasn't such an innocent lamb led astray by his wife. Rather, they teach us quite explicitly: **"כאן כבר בטובה—here he displayed a lack of gratitude."** With this understanding, we can recognize that the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as" evolved as a result of Adam's lack of gratitude toward HKB"H. Seeing as "aveirah goreret aveirah"—one misdeed leads to another—his ungratefulness then extended to the woman HKB"H had formed for him to be his aid and counterpart—his "eizer k'negdo."

He Was Punished "Midah K'neged Midah"

At this point, we can appreciate the element of "midah k'neged midah"—measure for measure—contained in the harsh punishment HKB"H imposed on Adam HaRishon and all the neshamos contained within his being, in the aftermath of the sin (ibid. 3, 17):

"ולאדם אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתוך לאמר לא תאכל ממנו, ארורה האדמה בעבורך בעצבון תאכלנה כל ימי חיך, וקוץ ודרדר תצמיח לך ואכלת את עשב השדה, בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם עד שובך אל האדמה כי ממנה לקחת, כי עבר אתה ואל עבר תשוב."

To Adam He said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate of the tree about which I commanded you saying, 'You shall not eat of it,' accursed is the ground because of you; through suffering shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until you return to the ground, from which you were taken."

With this harsh punishment, HKB"H intended to teach Adam HaRishon a lesson. He must understand that it is essential to correct the root cause of the sin—not recognizing the extent of his debt of gratitude to HKB"H. After all, HKB"H provided him with all the trees of the garden, available to him without any effort on his part. As a consequence, he would no longer have fruit readily available. Instead, he would be forced to toil and labor and sweat; he would have to plow the field, plant the trees and clear away the thorn and thistle. To ensure that his manual labors are successful in producing fruit that are suitable for consumption, he would need to pray to Hashem. In this manner, he would learn to recognize and appreciate his debt of gratitude to HKB"H for helping ensure that his hard work and efforts were not in vain. Thus, he would make amends for the lack of gratitude he displayed toward HKB"H when everything was readily available at his fingertips without any exertion whatsoever.

We can now shed some light on the insight provided by the great Rabbi Shem Klingberg. He taught us that the mitzvah of bringing "bikkurim" constitutes a tikun for the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as." Adam sinned by eating of the fruit from the one tree that was off limits to him—the Eitz HaDa'as. As we have learned, his sin stemmed from a lack of "Hakaras hatov." Therefore, when the first fruit of the land are produced, he is instructed to bring a minchah of "bikkurim" as an expression of his "Hakaras hatov" to HKB"H. Thus, this constitutes a wonderful tikun for the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as."

This also explains very nicely why Chazal chose to formulate the person's declaration in the negative: **"ואמרת אליו, שאינך כפוי טובה—you shall declare to the Kohen that you are not a kifui tovah"**—an ungrateful person. He is not instructed to make a positive declaration: **"I am a 'makir tovah'"**—I recognize my debt of gratitude to HKB"H. For, as we have established, bringing the minchah of "bikkurim" represents a tikun for Adam HaRishon, who denied his debt of gratitude to HKB"H. Therefore, Chazal instructed the person bringing "bikkurim" to make his declaration before the Kohen in the negative: **"I am not a 'kifui tovah'!"** In other words, I have learned my lesson and wish to make amends. I am no longer a "kifui tovah" as I was at the time of the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as"—when my neshamah was part of Adam HaRishon's being. In essence, he is confessing for a past wrong that he committed and is declaring that from now on, he will no longer commit that wrong.

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