

BEING GRATEFUL

Background

The Gemara brings us two classic examples of *kofi tov* - denying the good. The first is when Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*. Instead of owning up to his guilt, he blamed in on his wife claiming, “*That woman that You gave to me as a helpmate, she gave me the fruit to eat.*”

The second example was the Jewish Nation on receiving the Torah. HASHEM said, “*Who would give that they always maintain this level?*” We should have answered, “You should give,” meaning, “HASHEM, You should give us the ability to maintain that level.” However, as Tosfos explains, we didn’t want to be beholden to HASHEM, so we didn’t ask for HASHEM to help us maintain that lofty level.

Questions

It doesn’t seem that Adam was guilty of denying the good. HASHEM appeared to him and he felt trapped, caught red-handed. The correct action on his part would have been to admit his guilt and beg for forgiveness. That isn’t what he did. Instead, he engaged in small-minded shifting of the blame. However, there was a logic to it. “*Because she was given to me as a helpmate, I relied on her and trusted her.*” That fact does mitigate his guilt. After all, no one less than the Creator of the heavens and the earth gave him this woman as an aide. Surely, he could trust HASHEM’s choice.

Adam was guilty of not owning up to his responsibility for the act. Perhaps he was also guilty of being dishonest. He just wasn’t courageous enough to admit that he did wrong. But his sin wasn’t one of not appreciating the good.

Question #2:

According to Tosfos, the *Klal Yisroel* didn’t want to say to HASHEM, “You give,” so that He would insure that they remain on that level because they didn’t want to be beholden to HASHEM. That doesn’t seem to have anything to do with denying the good. They weren’t denying a debt they owed; they didn’t want to get into a new debt. They didn’t want to ask because that would mean they would owe HASHEM for that kindness. If anything, it shows that they were the type of people who recognized and appreciated the good done to them. Why should they be called ingrates?

ספר בראשית פרק ג

(יב) ויאמר האדם האשה אשר נתתה עמדי הוא נתנה לי מן העץ ואכל:

רש"י על בראשית פרק ג פסוק יב

(יב) אשר נתת עמדי - (ע"ז ה) כאן כפר בטובה:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת עבודה זרה דף ה/א

תנו רבנן מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם אמר להן משה לישראל כפויי טובה בני כפויי טובה בשעה שאמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם היה להם לומר תן אתה כפויי טובה דכתיב ונפשנו

בלחם הקלוקל בני כפויי טובה דכתיב האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל

תוספות עבודה זרה דף ה/א

כפויי טובה - לכך קראם כפויי טובה שלא רצו לומר אתה תן לפי שלא היו רוצים להחזיק לו טובה בכך