

Eikev / עֵקֶב

Lessons of Blessings

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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

The Greenbaum family does something very special each time they sit down to eat. Before talking about anything else at the table, each member of the family thanks Hashem for something.

"Thank you Hashem for my hands," said Mommy as everyone sat down to eat supper. "Without them I could have never prepared this food for everyone."

"I'm thankful to Hashem for my wonderful chavrusa," Totty said. "Because of him I learn so much better than I would on my own."

"I want to thank Hashem for our comfortable house," said Shimmy. "Totty and I once saw a homeless man on the street, and I realized how lucky we are to not have to sleep in a cardboard box on the sidewalk."

"Thank you Hashem for my skin," Yitzy said. "It protects my internal organs and keeps out diseases."

"Thank you Hashem for the snakes!" said little Yaeli.

"Snakes?!?!" exclaimed Basya, horrified, and lifting her feet up off the floor. "Where? Why would we thank Hashem for that?"

"Actually," said Yitzy. "My Rebbi said b'sheim the Chazon Ish that even dangerous animals like snakes are in this world for a good reason because Hashem uses them to punish reshaim, and also if we didn't have them we would feel that the world is missing something."

"I wouldn't miss them," grumbled Basya, her feet still off the ground as her eyes darted around the room looking for snakes.



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“Not bad snakes,” Yaeli tried to explain. “I mean like the snakes that Uncle Motty served us when we had the barbakoo at his house.”

“Steaks, Yaeli, steaks!” Shimmy said, giggling. “Uncle Motty served us steaks at the barbecue, not snakes.”

“Oh,” said Yaeli, as Basya slowly lowered her feet to the floor, still looking around a bit nervously.

“Basya, what are you going to thank Hashem for?” asked Mommy.

“Um hmmm...” thought Basya. “Thank you Hashem for everything!”

“Basya,” Totty said. “You know we have a rule that you can’t just say ‘thank you for everything.’”

“But why not?” asked Basya. “He does so much for us. It should be better to thank Him for all of the millions and millions of things that He does, and not just one thing.”

“I’ll explain after supper,” Totty said. “But for now, pick one thing.”

“Okay,” Basya said resignedly. “Thank you Hashem that we don’t have snakes in our house. There aren’t any snakes here, right?”

“No, Basya,” Mommy said with a smile. “Boruch Hashem we have no snakes in our house.”

As the Greenbaum family finished their supper, Totty brought a stack of blank paper to the table and handed it to Basya.

“What’s this for?” asked Basya, confused.

“Well, you said you wanted to thank Hashem for everything,” Totty answered. “I’d like you to write down one hundred things that you are thankful for.”

“A hundred things???” Basya protested. “But that’s so hard!”

“You said you wanted to thank Hashem for millions of things!” replied Totty. “I’m only asking you to write down a tiny amount of that.”

“Oh, okay,” Basya agreed, and she began to write.

A few minutes later, Basya looked up from her paper with a huge smile.

“Wow, Totty,” she said. “Writing all of these things down made me realize more than ever before just how many amazing things Hashem does for me!”

“Yes, Basya,” smiled Totty. “And that’s why Rav Miller used to say that thanking Hashem for ‘everything’ is like saying ‘thank you for nothing.’” Because it’s easy to say ‘thanks for everything’, it doesn’t take any thought. But when you take the time to think about specific things that Hashem does, it makes us truly appreciate how much He actually gives us.”

“Oh, is that why Dovid Hamelech made a takanah that we have to say one hundred brachos every day?”

“Yes it is!” Totty smiled again. “By taking the time to thank Hashem separately for one hundred things each day, we gain an even greater and deeper understanding and awareness of the good that He gives us.”

“And my Rebbi told us that there is a remez to this in this week’s Parsha,” said Yitzy. “It says *וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלְקֵיךָ שׂאֵל מֵעַמּוּד מָה ה’* and Chazal say you can also read it as *מֵאָה ה’ אֶלְקֵיךָ שׂאֵל מֵעַמּוּד*, that Hashem wants us to say one hundred Brachos each day!”

“Yasher koach, Yitzy!” said Totty proudly.

“Thank you for teaching me this important lesson, Totty,” Basya said, as she stood up to leave the room.”

“Wait, Basya,” Totty said, looking at the papers on the table. “You wrote ‘thank you that we don’t have snakes in our house’ three times.”

“Well, yeah,” Basya grinned. “That’s something I’m really really thankful for!”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

**We should always be busy thanking Hashem, even a hundred times a day!
If we thank Him for something specific, it will make us truly happy and connected to Hashem.**



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