



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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Importance of Hakarat Hatov

לֹא־יָבֹא עִמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקֶהֱל ה' גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי
לֹא־יָבֹא לָהֶם בְּקֶהֱל ה' עַד־עוֹלָם: עַל־דִּבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
קִדְּמוּ אֹתְכֶם בְּלָחֶם וּבַמַּיִם בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם
וְאֲשֶׁר שָׂכַר עֲלֵיךְ אֶת־בְּלָעַם בֶּן־בְּעוֹר מִפְּתוֹר אֲרָם
נְהַרִים לְקַלְלָךְ: ... לֹא־תִתְעַב אֲדָמִי כִּי אֲחִיךָ הוּא לֹא־
תִתְעַב מִצְרִי כִּי־גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ: בְּנִים אֲשֶׁר־יֻלְּדוּ
לָהֶם דּוֹר שְׁלִישִׁי יָבֹא לָהֶם בְּקֶהֱל ה': (דברים כג:
ד-ח; ט)

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of Hashem; even the tenth generation shall never enter the assembly of Hashem. Because they did not greet you with bread and water on the way, when you left Egypt, and because he [the people of Moab] hired Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim against you, to curse you.... You shall not despise an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not despise an Egyptian, for you were a sojourner in his land. Children who are born to them [in] the third generation may enter the assembly of Hashem. (Devarim 23: 4-5; 8-9)

**AMON AND MOAV – CANNOT CONVERT;
EGYPTIANS CONVERSION - EFFECTIVE
AFTER THREE GENERATIONS**

The Torah highlights that a male from

Amon and Moav is not able to convert and become a part of the Jewish nation. The reason is provided as well. Because they did not provide certain necessities to us when we requested food and water on our journey from Egypt to Israel. Yet, surprisingly, the Torah informs us only a few pesukim later that an Egyptian who converts is able to become part of the Jewish nation after three generations.

Many commentators are bothered by this distinction. The Egyptians threw our children into the Nile and oppressed us, yet we allow them to enter the fold after three generations. Amon and Moav did not physically oppress us, they just withheld necessities from us. It would appear that the Mitzrim were crueler than Amon and Moav and should not merit joining our nation. Why does the Torah prohibit Amon and Moav from ever converting, and allows the Mitzrim to do so?

GRATITUDE

The Yam Simcha offers the following explanation. The Ramban suggests that since Avraham saved their ancestor Lot, Amon and Moav owe us a debt of gratitude. Although this occurred hundreds of years earlier, one should show appreciation for such an act. Their having withheld food and water from us portrays the *midah* of *Kafoy Tovah* (lack of appreciation).

With respect to the Egyptians, although they killed us, earlier in history they

provided us with a place to live as well as sustenance during the early days of the famine (in the time that Yosef was second in command). For this we are grateful and therefore eventually (after three generations) allow them to become part of our nation.

RETURNING SECURITY

Later in the parsha we are informed of the halacha that when one provides a loan and takes a security to secure the loan, he is obligated to return the security if the borrower is poor and needs the object.

הַשֶּׁבַח תָּשִׁיב לוֹ אֶת־הַעֲבוֹט כְּבוֹא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְשָׁכַב
בְּשִׁלְמָתוֹ וּבִרְכָּהּ.... (דברים כד: יג)

*You shall return the security to him by sunset, so that he may lie down [to sleep] in his garment, and **he will bless you...*** (Devarim 24: 13).

The Torah dictates that when the lender returns the security to the borrower, the borrower should **bless** him. Why is it necessary to include this recommendation that the borrower **bless** the lender? Again, this is an example of offering gratitude (הכרת הטוב) for having voluntarily returned the security.

HUMILITY

In general, when one offers gratitude to another it is a humbling experience. The individual admits that he required assistance and appreciates that another provided him with it. As we begin to recite shlichot- we include the following statement: לך ה הצדקה, ולנו בשת הפנים - We are to be humbled. As a nation, we are referred to as יְהוּדִים from the root of the word להודות - to express thanks (as well as to admit). This time of year it behooves us to not only seek forgiveness

for any misdeeds we may have committed to others, but also to express our gratitude to others for all they have done and for being there for us. This includes our parents, spouse, children and friends. May we instill humility and express our gratitude so that we strengthen our bonds with others and make the most of the month of Elul. ■



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