

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

The Negative Impact of Not Being Makir Tov

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

In this week's Parsha the Pasuk states, "You should not distance a Mitzri, because you were a stranger in their land." The Daas Zekanim explains the Pasuk that, "Even though in the end they subjugated you, you should not distance them because you were strangers in their land and they originally did good for you."

At first glance, it might seem puzzling to express gratitude toward the Mitzrim, given their cruelty and malevolence towards us. The Mitzrim acted with such wickedness and cruelty towards us making them deserving of being put to death. The justice that was meted out towards them was clearly much worse than us distancing from them, clearly illustrating that they do not deserve this Hakaras Hatov!

It must be that the lack in Hakaras Hatov the Daas Zekanim is referring to is not from the perspective of the Mitzri, but it is rather from the perspective of Klal Yisrael. It is not that the Mitzriim deserve Hakaras Hatov, it is that Klal Yisrael would be negatively impacting their Middah of Hakaras Tov by distancing a Mitzri. We see from here how delicate the Middah of Hakaras Hatov truly is. That even when the recipient of the good is undeserving of it, not being Makir Tov would damage your sensitivity and

appreciation for the good that you receive. This insight is critical as the Chovos Halevovos tells us that Hakaras Tov lies at the foundation of our Avodas Hashem

The Ralbag takes this a step further, he writes "The Torah distanced a Mitzri and Edomi more than the nations of the world due to their evil conduct...and if not for the fact that Edom is our brother, and that we lived in Egypt, we would distance them for ever."

According to the Ralbag the Mitzriim pose a spiritual threat to Klal Yisrael due to their evil conduct. However we need to take that risk in order to be Makir Tov. It sounds like the Ralbag is saying that not being Makir Tov is a greater spiritual concern than the influence of the Mitzrim.

This is a timely message for the month of Elul, being that it is a time to work on our relationship with Hashem, as it stands for "I am to beloved, and he is to me." A stepping stone to this relationship is appreciating all the good in our lives which is developed through the Middah of Hakaras Hatov. May we be zoche to continuously grow in this Middah.