



## HOW DO WE GO FROM BEIN HAMETZARIM (BETWEEN THE BOUNDARIES) TO A HERITAGE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES?

**T**he Mishna, *Avot* 4:1 teaches us “*Eizehu ashir hasameach b’chelko*” — Who is wealthy? One who is happy with one’s portion. The simplest, most direct way to determine that we are happy with our portion is to see if we are also happy with our friend’s portion. This demonstrates that there is no jealousy or resentment, but rather a state described by Ben Azai (*Yoma* 38):

בשמך יקראוך ובמקומך יושיבוך ומשלך יתנו  
לך אין אדם נוגע במוכן לחבירו ואין מלכות  
נוגעת בחברתה אפילו כמלא נימא.  
*By your name they shall call you, in  
your place they shall seat you and from  
your own they shall give you. No person  
touches what is designated for another  
and one reign does not overlap without  
another even by the width of a hair.*

This state is only possible when our lives are filled with a sense of *hakarat hatov* (gratitude) to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and to other people.

For this reason, the very last miracle in the chain of miracles that took place as we left Mitzrayim was that the dogs didn’t bark as we left:

וְלֹכֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִחְרֹץ כְּלָב לְשׁוֹנוֹ לְמַאִישׁ  
וְעַד בְּהֵמָה לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּן אֲשֶׁר יַפְלֶה ה' בֵּין  
מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל.

*But not a dog shall snarl at any of the  
Israelites, at man or beast — in order  
that you may know that the Lord makes  
a distinction between Egypt and Israel.*  
**Shemot 11:7**

There is an obvious question that must be asked. During the Ten Makkot, there was a clear distinction

between the Jewish people and the Egyptians. The Jews were protected from the makkot and the Egyptians were not. If so, what exactly did this miracle demonstrate that was not demonstrated during the Ten Makkot?

The answer is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted us to leave Mitzrayim not only focusing on the miracles that took place but on what we learned from the experience — the trait of *hakarat hatov*. The dog symbolizes this trait. Maharsha, *Chidushei Agadot, Sanhedrin* 97a, teach us that the etymology of the word for dog, *kelev* is based on it being *kulo lev v’ne’eman la’adon* — it has complete loyalty toward its master.

Rav Yitzchak Aramah, *Akeidat Yitzchak* (Shemot 30:12) teaches:

אם הכרת החסד המקובל תעדר והשבת הגמול הראוי לו תבטל. על מה ועל מה העולם עומד.

*If gratitude for kindness would disappear and repayment for good deeds would fade away, what would the world stand on?*

During the Three Weeks, we read Parashat Matot, which includes the request of the tribes of Gad and Reuven:

וּמִקְנֵה רֵב רַב הָיָה לִבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלִבְנֵי גָד עֲצוּם מְאֹד וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ יַעֲזֹר וְאֶת אֶרֶץ גִּלְעָד וְהָיָה הַמָּקוֹם מִקּוֹם מִקְנֵה. וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי גָד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֲלֵעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶל נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר. עֲטֹרוֹת וְדִיבֹן וַיַּעֲזֹר וְנִמְרָה וְחֶשְׁבֹּן וְאֲלַעֵלָה וּשְׁבֶם וְנָבו וְעֵנָן. הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה ה' לִפְנֵי עַדְתֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ מִקְנֵה הוּא וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ מִקְנֵה. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִם מִצְאָנוּ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ יִתֵּן אֶת הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְעַבְדֶּיךָ לְאֶחָדָה אֶל תַּעֲבִירֵנוּ אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן.

*The Reubenites and the Gadites owned cattle in very great numbers. Noting that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were a region suitable for cattle, the Gadites and the Reubenites came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the chieftains of the community, and said, "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon — the land that the Lord has conquered for the community of Israel is cattle country, and your servants have cattle. It would be a favor to us," they continued, "if this land were given to your servants as a holding; do not move us across the Jordan."*

The tribes of Gad and Reuven don't explicitly connect their desire to remain on the other side of the Jordan to their abundant cattle. If not for the cattle, why did they want to remain and why is the abundance of cattle mentioned? Perhaps they wanted to remain out of gratitude toward Moshe Rabbeinu. These two tribes were the

most loyal to Moshe Rabbeinu. While the other tribes consumed their cattle in the forty years in the desert, these tribes subsisted on the *manna* and *slav* (quail) that fell from the sky. This is what Moshe Rabbeinu told them to eat, and they couldn't betray their leader who selflessly dedicated himself to leading them through the desert.

What really motivated them to remain on the other side of the Jordan? They knew that Moshe Rabbeinu would not merit to enter Eretz Yisrael and would be buried on the other side of the Jordan:

וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֶל ה' בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר. ה' אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה הַחֲלוּת לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת עַבְדְּךָ אֶת גְּדֻלָּה וְאֶת יָדְךָ הַחֲזָקָה אֲשֶׁר מִי א-ל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה כְּמַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְכַגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ. אֲעַבְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הָאֶרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הַהַר הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהִלְבֵּנוּ. וַיַּחֲעֲבֵר ה' בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵלַי רֵב לָךְ אֵל תּוֹסֶף דָּבָר אֵלַי עוֹד בְּדָבָר הַזֶּה. עֲלֵה רֹאשׁ הַפִּסְגָּה וּשְׂא עֵינֶיךָ יְמֵה וְצַפְנָה וְתִימְנָה וּמִזְרְחָהּ וְרֵאָה בְּעֵינֶיךָ כִּי לֹא תַעֲבֵר אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה.

*I pleaded with the Lord at that time, saying, "O Lord God, You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no god in heaven or on earth can equal! Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and Lebanon." But the Lord was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. The Lord said to me, "Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again! Go up to the summit of Pisgah and gaze about, to the west, the north, the south, and the east. Look at it well, for you shall not go across yonder Jordan."*

**Devarim 3:23-26**

Moshe Rabbeinu died on the other side of the Jordan and was buried there. The tribes of Gad and Reuven and Gad said: How can we leave

Moshe Rabbeinu alone, buried on the other side of the Jordan? Our health, sustenance and satisfaction in the desert was because we listened to Moshe Rabbeinu and ate *manna* and *slav* rather than our cattle. Our gratitude toward Moshe Rabbeinu is so great that it is worthwhile to remain on the other side of the Jordan, even if by doing so we will lose out on the opportunity to live in Eretz Yisrael.

At the end of Moshe Rabbeinu's life, he blesses the tribe of Gad by saying:

וּלְגַד אָמַר בְּרוּךְ מִרְחִיב גֵּד כְּלָבִיא שֶׁכֵּן וְטָרַף זָרוּעַ אִף קְדֻקָּה. וַיִּרְא רְאשִׁית לֹא כִּי שָׁם חָלְקַת מִחֻקֵּי סָפוּן וַיִּתָּא רְאשִׁי עִם צְדָקַת ה' עֲשֶׂה וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל.

*And of Gad he said: Blessed be He who enlarges Gad. Poised is he like a lion to tear off arm and scalp. He chose for himself the best, For there is the portion of the revered chieftain, Where the heads of the people come. He executed the Lord's judgments And His decisions for Israel.*

What does, "He chose for himself the best, For there is the portion of the revered chieftain" refer to? It refers to the fact that Gad (and Reuven) chose to remain with Moshe Rabbeinu.

The trait that the tribes of Gad and Reuven embodied — *hakarat hatov* — has the power to eliminate the jealousy and resentment that lead to *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred) and bring us from *Bein Hametzarim* (between the boundaries) to a *nachalah b'li mitzarim*, a heritage without boundaries — Blessed be He who enlarges Gad. *Hakarat hatov* is the root and foundation of *ahavat Yisrael*, love of a fellow Jew, of *ahavat Hashem*. It is the key to the path toward our redemption and the rebuilding of Yerushalayim and our Holy Land.