

## The Tikun for Adam HaRishon's Lack of Gratitude: "Honor your Wives so that you will become Wealthy"

We read in this week's parsha (Bereishis 3, 12): **וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם** — the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate". Rashi comments: **"כֹּאֵן כִּפְר בְּטוֹבָה"** — this statement demonstrates that Adam was ungrateful for the kindness HKB"H had shown him. This notion is founded on the following Gemoreh (A.Z. 5a): **אָמַר לְהֵן מֹשֶׁה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּפְוִי טוֹבָה בְּנֵי כִפְוִי טוֹבָה - כִּפְוִי טוֹבָה, דְּכַתִּיב (בְּמִדְבָּר כֹּא-ה) וּנְפָשְׁנוּ קֶצֶה בְּלַחֵם הַקְּלוּקָל, בְּנֵי כִפְוִי טוֹבָה, דְּכַתִּיב הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִיא נָתַתָּה לִּי מִן הָעֵץ וְאוֹכְלָה** — Moshe reprimands Yisroel for being "ingrates, the descendants of an ingrate" after they complain about the "mahn".

The Gemoreh cites the possuk above as proof that Adam HaRishon was ungrateful and lacked appreciation for HKB"H's favor. As Rashi explains: **אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי, לְשׁוֹן גְּנָאֵי הוּא, שְׁתוּלָה** — **הַקְּלָקְלָה בְּמִתְנַתְּנוּ שֶׁל מָקוֹם וְהוּא עֲשָׂאָה לוֹ לְעוֹזֵר** — Adam's remark "whom You gave to be with me" was uttered impudently; he was blaming his transgression and his shortcoming on the gift the Omnipresent had given him — the woman he had been given to assist him and be his companion.

The entire scenario is difficult to comprehend. (a) In truth, concerning the creation of the first woman, the possuk explicitly states (Bereishis 2, 18): **וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹקִים לֹא טוֹב הִיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ** — Hashem G-d said, "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him". Yet, Adam's claim that the woman had offered him the fruit to eat was truthful. So, why do our blessed sages accuse him of being ungrateful based on this remark. (b) Certainly, the words of the Almighty are eternal and accurate, so how are we to understand the contention: **אֲעֲשֶׂא** — "אֲעֲשֶׂא לוֹ עוֹזֵר כִּנְגְדוֹ" -- I will make him a helper against him? In reality, not only did she not help him, she accomplished just the opposite — she caused his downfall in the matter of the Etz HaDa'as.

### Adam Failed by Being the Receiver rather than the Giver

The truth of the matter is to be found in HKB"H's statement describing the nature and creation of the woman: **"אֲעֲשֶׂא לוֹ עוֹזֵר כִּנְגְדוֹ"** -- I will make him a helper against him. Undoubtedly, HKB"H created woman with the characteristics and abilities to assist her husband

— to be an "ezer". Yet, the description "ezer k'negdo" contains two contradictory terms; for, one who is a helper is not against him and, vice-versa, one who is an adversary is not a helper. Thus, HKB"H was hinting to Adam a very important message explained by Rashi: **"זֶכֶה עוֹזֵר, לֹא זֶכֶה כִּנְגְדוֹ לְהִלָּחֵם"** — if man is fortunate and meritorious, she will be an "ezer", a helper; however, if he is not meritorious, she will be "k'negdo", against him — an adversary.

The term "ezer" indicates that she is meant to help man accomplish his desired goals. So, when HKB"H tells Adam: **"אֲעֲשֶׂא לוֹ עוֹזֵר כִּנְגְדוֹ"** -- I will make him a helper against him, HKB"H is conveying the message that the reality and outcome depend solely on man himself. If he strives to engage in Torah study and to serve Hashem, his wife will be an "ezer" — assisting him to serve Hashem. If, however, he does not endeavor to study Torah and to serve Hashem, not only will she not be an "ezer", she will, in fact, be a "k'negdo" — opposing him and leading to his failure. Concerning this matter, we find the following elucidation in the Gemoreh (Sanhedrin 110a) of the possuk in Mishlei (14, 1): **"חֲכָמוֹת** — **נְשִׁים בְּנִתָּה בֵּיתָה, זֶה אֲשֶׁתוֹ שֶׁל אֹהֵן בֵּן פֶּלֶת, וְאוֹלֵת בִּידֵיהָ תִּהְרַסְנָה, זֶה אֲשֶׁתוֹ שֶׁל קֶרֶח** — the wife of Ohn ben Peles is referred to as wise and constructive, because she saved her husband's life; Korach's wife is referred to as foolish and destructive — precipitating her husband's downfall and demise.

Hence, we can draw the following conclusion. Since the first woman — Adam's "ezer k'negdo" — not only did not help Adam, but actually caused him to sin with the Etz HaDa'as, it is clear that he was not meritorious — in Rashi's words: "lo zochoh". Had he stood firm, adhering resolutely to Hashem's warning not to eat from the Etz HaDa'as, he would have accomplished two objectives: (a) he would have resisted his wife's advice and avoided the sin and (b) he would have prepared her ahead of time and counseled her not to converse with the serpent, the "nochosh", so as not to fall into its trap.

Nevertheless, Adam HaRishon himself fell prey to the yetzer's persuasive ploy — desiring to partake of the fruit of the Etz HaDa'as. As a result, his wife was transformed from an "ezer" into a "k'negdo" — precipitating his downfall. Even so, Adam did not accept responsibility for what transpired as he should have.

Instead, he presented the following defense to HKB”H: **האשה** “**האשה** — אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל” — he essentially blamed HKB”H for providing him with the woman who caused him to sin and fail. Therefore, our blessed sages were justified in their conclusion: **“כאן כפר בטובה”** — this remark demonstrated that Adam HaRishon was ungrateful and unappreciative.

**“Because You Followed Your Wife’s Advice”  
— You Were Influenced rather  
than Being the Influential Force**

After much consideration, I would like to add an insight of my own. After failing in the matter of the Etz HaDa’as, HKB”H rebukes Adam HaRishon as follows (Bereishis 3, 17): **“ולאדם”** **אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך, ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתך לאמר לא — תאכל ממנו, ארורה האדמה בעבורך בעיצבון תאכלנה כל ימי חיך”** — to Adam He said, “Because you heeded your wife’s words and ate of the tree about which I commanded you saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ accursed is the ground because of you; through suffering shall you eat of it all the days of your life”. Let us present the explanation of the Tzemach Dovid (Bereishis), authored by the great Rabbi Dovid of Dinov, zy”a:

**“ולאדם אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך וגו’, יש לדקדק וכי בזה חטא ששמע לקול אשתו, הלא החטא היה שעבר על ציווי השי”ת, והיה לו לומר כי לא שמעת לקולי. ונראה כי השי”ת רמז בזה ליציר כפיו מוסר השכל ואמר לו, הלא ידעת כי בראתי לאיש שיהיה משפיע והאשה שתהיה בחינת מקבל.**

**ואיה איפוא חכמתך שאמרת, האשה אשר נתת עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל, ונעשית אתה המקבל והפכת הצינורות, ועבירה גוררת עבירה שאכלת מה שאסרתי לך. וזהו כי שמעת לקול אשתך, זה חטא קל, אך מזה נגרר חטא גדול, ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתך לבלתי אכול ממנו, לזאת יראה כל אחד להישמר גם מחטא קל, למען יהיה שלם עם ה’ כן יהי רצון”.**

Adam is rebuked for heeding the words of his wife. This is surprising, since his sin was that he violated HKB”H’s command. The possuk should have said, “Because you did not heed My words”. Hence, it appears that the Lord was teaching his handiwork, Adam, a vital lesson. Man is meant to be the influential force; woman is meant to be the receiver of the influence.

Adam neglected his wisdom and reversed the roles; he acted as the receiver and was influenced. Then one offense led to another; you partook of that which I forbade you. This all happened because you followed your wife’s advice. That minor transgression led to a major transgression. We see, therefore, that one must be wary of even minor transgressions in order to remain true to Hashem!

We can understand his sacred words in light of what we have learned in the Gemoreh (Kiddushin 29b); only men are obligated in the mitzvah of learning Torah — women are not. This is derived

from the possuk (Devorim 11, 19): **“ולמדתם אותם את בניכם - ולא בנותיכם”** — the possuk specifies teaching our sons rather than our daughters. Since women are free of this obligation, it is mandatory that a husband teach his wife and instruct her in the ways of the Torah. By doing so, he will insure that she acts in accordance with Torah precepts.

This is how HKB”H created man. The man is meant to be the “mashpia” — to influence his wife with Torah knowledge. The woman is meant to be the “mikabel” — to receive his influence and learn to act accordingly. Had Adam and Chava observed this format, they would not have fallen into the nochosh’s trap and eaten from the Etz HaDa’as. Adam would have seen fit to teach his wife ahead of time to resist the wiles and deception of the nochosh and not to converse with it.

In this regard Adam erred. Rather than act as a “mashpia” — teaching his wife to follow Torah precepts — he became a “mikabel”. He followed her advice concerning his interaction with the outside world. This violated the basic premise of creation. Then one transgression led to another. Not only did he fail to influence his wife with his Torah knowledge — teaching her how to overcome the serpent’s persuasive ways — he was actually influenced by her words to eat from the Etz HaDa’as.

Hence, HKB”H rebuked Adam HaRishon on two counts: (1) for following his wife’s advice--**“כי שמעת לקול אשתך”** — and not adopting his intended role as the “mashpia”,and (2) as a result of this first minor indiscretion: **“ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתך”** — **“לבלתי אכל ממנו”** — for partaking from the forbidden fruit contrary to HKB”H’s command.

We can now begin to appreciate why our sages classified Adam’s remark to HKB”H--“The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate”--as a sign of ungratefulness. HKB”H created the woman intending that she be an “ezer” to assist him in his service of Hashem. Had he elected to wage battle against the “nochosh hakadmoni”,she would have aided him in that battle. However, since he himself fell prey to the evil yetzer — at least in thought — the opposite came true: **“לא זכה כנגדו”** — she fulfilled an adversarial role, causing him to fail in the matter of the Etz HaDa’as. Despite his failure and shortcoming, he had the audacity to argue: **“האשה אשר נתתה”** **“עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל”** — The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate. This led our sages to conclude that Adam was ungrateful.

**A Woman Defeats the Yetzer  
by Means of Her Husband’s Torah**

We can embellish this idea of the Tzemach Dovid based on what we have learned in the Gemoreh (Beroches 17a): **“אמר ליה”**

**רב לרבי חייא, נשים במאי זכיין, באקרויי בנייהו לבי כנישתא, ובאתנויי** — גברייהו בי רבנן, ונטרין לגברייהו עד דאתו מבי רבנן” — Rav said to Rabbi Chiya: By what means due women accrue merit? By bringing their children to the synagogue to learn Torah, and by sending their husbands to the study hall, and by waiting for their husbands until they return from the study hall.

The commentaries are bewildered by the Gemoreh’s question: “By what means due women accrue merit?” Surely, women perform many mitzvos and good deeds. They are obligated in all mitzvos aseh that do not have a time constraint; they are obligated in all mitzvos lo ta’aseh; additionally, there are mitzvos that apply only to women. A wonderful interpretation of the Gemoreh’s question is found in the Yearot Devash (1, 1) and in the Beis Shmuel Acharon (Balak). We have learned the following (Beroches 12b): **“אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה, הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר”** — Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said: I am like a seventy-year-old man and I did not merit to convince my colleagues that the exodus from Egypt should be mentioned at night . . . The Bartenura explains that the phrase “I did not merit” means that he did not prevail over the other sages.

Similarly, one cannot prevail over the yetzer hara except by means of Torah-study. This idea is expressed in the Gemoreh as follows (Kiddushin 30b): **“כך אמר הקב”ה לישראל, בני בראתי יצר הרע ובראתי לו תורה תבלין, ואם אתם עוסקים בתורה אין אתם נמסרים בידו”** — so said HKB”H to Yisroel: My children, I have created the yetzer hara and I have created the Torah as its antidote; if you engage in Torah-study, you will not fall prey to it. In light of this tenet, women are seemingly defenseless against the yetzer hara; for they are not commanded to study Torah. This is what prompted Rav to ask Rabbi Chiya: “By what means due women accrue merit?” The question is not what merits do they possess, but what enables them to prevail over the yetzer hara in the absence of the mitzvah of Torah-study?

To which Rabbi Chiya replied: By bringing their children to the synagogue to learn Torah, and by sending their husbands to the study hall, and by waiting for their husbands until they return from the study hall. In other words, in the merit of women assisting and enabling their sons and their husbands to engage in Torah-study, they share in the credit for that Torah-study. So much so, that it is considered as if they themselves engaged in Torah-study — providing them with the necessary power to overcome and defeat the yetzer hara.

**“By what means due women accrue merit?”  
Enabling Them to Rectify Chava’s  
Culpability in the Sin of the Etz HaDa’as**

At this point, we can better appreciate the impact of the words of the great Rabbi Dovid of Dinov, zy”a. He taught us that Adam

HaRishon’s sin and ultimate downfall emanated from the fact that: **“כי שמעת לקול אשתך”** — he acted as a “mashpia” rather than as a “mikabel” — he was influenced by her rather than vice-versa. Had he influenced her with his Torah and she had accepted his influence, she would have been able to withstand the persuasions and wiles of the nochosh — due to the merit and power of that Torah. By not influencing Chava with his Torah, and instead being influenced by her, they revealed that she did not submit to the force of his Torah. As a consequence, she lacked the necessary power of Torah to overcome and subdue the destructive influence of the nochosh — the yetzer.

In light of this understanding, we can propose a novel interpretation of Rav’s question to Rabbi Chiya: **“נשים במאי זכיין”** — By what means due women accrue merit? Our teacher, the Arizal, explains at great length in Shaar HaGilgulim (Introduction 31) that every person has to make amends for his or her part in the sin of the Etz HaDa’as. After all, all the male neshamot were included in Adam’s being, while all of the female neshamot were included in Chava’s being when they partook from the Etz HaDa’as.

This also clarifies the Midrash’s statement (B.R. 17, 8) that women were given three mitzvos in order to rectify their part in the sin of the Etz HaDa’as:

**“ומפני מה ניתן לה מצות נדה, על ידי ששפכה דמו של אדם הראשון, לפיכך ניתן לה מצות נדה. ומפני מה ניתן לה מצות חלה, על ידי שקלקלה את אדם הראשון שהיה גמר חלתו של עולם, לפיכך ניתן לה מצות חלה. ומפני מה ניתן לה מצות נר שבת, אמר לה על ידי שכתתה נשמתו של אדם הראשון לפיכך ניתן לה מצות נר שבת.”**

Woman was given the mitzvah of “niddah” for spilling Adam HaRishon’s blood. She was given the mitzvah of “challah”, for corrupting Adam HaRishon who represented the final stage in the preparation of the world’s sustenance for consumption; hence he is referred to as “the world’s challah”. Lastly, she was given the mitzvah of “ner Shabbas”. She makes amends for extinguishing Adam HaRishon’s Neshomeh by lighting Shabbas candles.

Thus, we can interpret Rav’s question of Rabbi Chiya as follows: **“נשים במאי זכיין”** — how are women able to rectify the fact that Chava caused Adam HaRishon’s downfall by giving him to eat from the Etz HaDa’as? The possuk states (Bereishis 3, 6): **“ותקח מפריו ותאכל ותתן גם לאישה עמה ויאכל”** — she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave to her husband with her; and he ate. Instead of functioning as a “mikabel”, she turned into a “mashpia”. To which Rabbi Chiya replies: **“באקרויי בנייהו לבי כנישתא, ובאתנויי גברייהו בי רבנן ונטרין לגברייהו עד דאתו מבי רבנן.”**

By going to great lengths to send their children to learn Torah, and by sending their husbands even to distant places to engage

in Torah study, and nevertheless waiting for their husbands to return from their studies, they prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that they desire to function in the status of a “mikabel”. They demonstrate that they wish to learn from their husbands the ways of the Torah; and they do not strive to act in the role of the “mashpia”. In this manner, they rectify their parts in Chava’s transgression involving the Etz HaDa’as — where she acted as a “mashpia” rather than as a “mikabel”.

### Fulfillment of All Mitzvos Stems from Recognition of Hashem’s Benevolence

Let us continue along this path to explain the practical significance of the sages’ message. It was bad enough that Adam HaRishon openly rebelled against HKB”H by violating a direct command not to eat from the Etz HaDa’as. Nonetheless, the sages found it necessary to stress that he was in truth an ingrate based on his remark: **“האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל”** -The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate. What is the practical import and lesson to be learned from the additional fact that he displayed a lack of appreciation concerning that woman that HKB”H had provided for him?

To comprehend the significance of a person’s lack of appreciation toward HKB”H, we need look no further than the first of the Aseret HaDibrot. We heard the commandment at Har Sinai directly from HKB”H (Shemos 20, 2): **“אנכי ה’ אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך — מארץ מצרים”** — I am Hashem, your G-d, who took you out of the land of Egypt. Rashi comments in the name of the Mechilta: **“כדאי”** — **“היא הוצאה שתהיו משועבדים לי”** — for the mere fact that HKB”H took us out of Egypt, we are forever indebted to Him. With that first commandment, HKB”H conveyed a vital principle. A Jew’s obligation to observe all of the Torah and its mitzvos stems from our debt of gratitude to HKB”H for taking us out of Egypt.

This basic premise coincides very closely with the message delivered by HKB”H via the prophet (Yeshayah 43, 21): **“עם זו”** **“יצרתי לי תהילתי יספרי”** — this people which I fashioned for Myself that they might declare My praise. Here Rashi comments: **“עם זו”** **“יצרתי לי, למען תהילתי יספרי”** — HKB”H created Yisroel to speak His praise. The purpose of creation is for Yisroel to spread the praise of Hashem. By so doing, we express our gratitude and recognition of all the favor He has shown us in His infinite mercy and kindness.

Additionally, let us introduce an important idea regarding the service of Hashem from the wonderful teachings of the great Rabbi of Shiniva, zy”a, in Divrei Yechezkel (Shemos). Occasionally a person performs an act which he initially considers to be a mitzvah; yet, subsequently, he is tormented by doubts. Maybe the deed was in fact just the opposite — an “aveirah”.

The Shiniver Rebbe suggests a simple test. Consider the consequences and the events that resulted from said act. If they are positive, it is a sign that the initial act was a mitzvah and produced positive fruit — an example of (Ovos 4, 2): **“מצוה גוררת”** **“מצוה”** — one mitzvah leads to another. On the other hand, if the consequences are negative, it is a sign that the initial act was not truly a mitzvah but rather an “aveirah”. Hence, another “aveirah” resulted from it (ibid.): **“עבירה גוררת עבירה”** — one “aveirah” leads to another.

In the Divrei Yechezkel HaChodosh (Vayechi), it is described how the great Shiniver Rebbe, zy”a, once presented this noble idea at his table on one holy Shabbos night. As a result of people pushing to get near, the candles were inadvertently extinguished. He remarked that this was a proof that their pushing was not “l’shem shamayim” — of pure intent. Had the pushing truly been “l’shem shamayim”, it would not have led to an aveirah.

### Deducing One Thing from Another

Based on this concept, we can provide a nice explanation for a statement found in the Gemoreh (Shabbos 31b). One of the questions a person is asked when he appears before the heavenly court is: **“הבנת דבר מתוך דבר”** — did you infer one thing from another? Since the yetzer hara often blinds one from the truth, and wants a person to believe that the “aveirah” he is performing is actually a mitzvah, the heavenly court asks the person: **“הבנת דבר מתוך דבר”** — did you infer one thing from another? In other words, did you examine the consequences of your action as a means of testing its true nature? If it was truly a mitzvah, other mitzvos and positive deeds should have ensued; whereas if it was an “aveirah”, another “aveirah” should have followed. In the latter case, you should have learned from the experience not to perform that act again.

Let us now apply this concept to what transpired with Adam HaRishon. HKB”H placed him in Gan Eden and placed him in control of all of creation. This is described in Tehillim (8, 7) as follows: **“תמשילוהו במעשי ידיך כל שתה תחת רגליו”** — You give him dominion over the work of Your hands, everything You placed under his feet. He was permitted to eat from all of the trees in the garden with the sole exception of the Etz HaDa’as, as it is written (Bereishis 2, 16): **“ויצו ה’ אלקים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל, ומעץ הדעת טוב”** **“ורע לא תאכלו ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות”** — and Hashem G-d commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Etz HaDa’as Tov Va’Ra, you must not eat thereof for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die”.

Clearly, when Adam HaRishon rebelled against Hashem by partaking of the Etz HaDa’as, he demonstrated the ultimate lack of gratitude. According to the Yearos Devash (2, 9), however, he was persuaded by the “nochosh kadmoni” that it was necessary for him

to partake of the Etz HaDa'as for the sake of Heaven — "I'shem shamayim". The nochosh deceived him into believing falsely that the Etz HaDa'as represented the fiftieth level of the "fifty gates of intuition" — the "chamishim sha'arei binah" — and that it was necessary even to sacrifice one's life in order to attain it.

Hence, our blessed sages, with their tremendous wisdom and insight, felt it necessary to teach us a vital lesson. We have seen that as a result of his actions, Adam HaRishon remarked to HKB"H: "האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל" --The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate — a remark demonstrating his lack of gratitude. As such, it reflected back on the act of eating from the Etz HaDa'as — revealing that that act also displayed a lack of gratitude toward HKB"H. Since one "aveirah" leads to another "aveirah", he also displayed his lack of gratitude concerning the woman that HKB"H had created as his "ezer k'negdo". It is essential, therefore, that we take this message to heart. It is incumbent upon us to rectify this act of ingratitude by fulfilling all of Hashem's mitzvos — as a sign of our deep appreciation to HKB"H for all the favor and kindness He has shown us.

### The Purpose of the Rains and Vegetation Are so that Man Will Recognize HKB"H's Benevolence

I have been inspired to provide a wonderful explanation for the Gemoreh's statement (B.M. 59a) concerning a husband's obligation to honor and respect his wife: "לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו, שאין ברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא בשביל אשתו, שנאמר (בראשית יב-טז) ולאברם היטיב בעבורה, והיינו דאמר להו רבא לבני מחוזא אוקירו לנשייכו כי היכי דתתעתרו" — in short, honor your wives so that you will become wealthy. We must endeavor to explain and understand the connection between honoring one's wife and wealth.

First, let us explain why HKB"H punished Adam HaRishon for the sin of the Etz HaDa'as by making him labor for his sustenance and livelihood. The pesukim state (Bereishis 3, 17): "ולאדם אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך ותאכל מן העץ אשר צויתך לאמר לא תאכל ממנו, ארורה האדמה בעבורך בעיצבון תאכלנה כל ימי חיך, וקוץ ודורדר תצמיח לך ואכלת את עשב השדה, בזעת אפך תאכל לחם עד שובך אל האדמה" — to Adam He said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate of the tree about which I commanded you saying, 'You shall not eat of it,' accursed is the ground because of you; through suffering shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until you return to the ground, from which you were taken . . .".

Here we are struck by an apparent difficulty. When HKB"H commanded Adam not to eat from the tree, he was only warned that he would incur the penalty of death (ibid. 2, 17): "ומעץ הדעת"

— טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות" — but of the Etz HaDa'as Tov Va'Ra you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. So, why did HKB"H also punish Adam regarding his livelihood.

I believe that we can suggest an answer based on an important principle concerning the rainfall that is necessary to produce vegetation from the earth. It states in our parsha (ibid. 2, 5): "וכל שיח השדה טרם יהיה בארץ וכל עשב השדה טרם יצמח, כי לא המטיר ה' אלקים על הארץ, ואדם אין לעבוד את האדמה" — now any tree of the field was not yet on the earth and any herb of the field had not yet sprouted, for Hashem G-d had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to work the soil. Rashi explains: "כי לא המטיר, ומאי טעמא לא המטיר, לפי שאדם אין לעבוד את האדמה ואין מכיר בטובתן של גשמים, וכשבא אדם וידע שהם צורך לעולם, התפלל עליהם וירדו וצמחו האילנות והדשאים" — and what is the reason that He had not sent rain? Because "there was no man to work the soil", and there was none who could recognize the goodness of the rains. When Adam came and realized that they are a necessity for the world, he prayed for them and they came down, and the trees and types of vegetation sprouted. In other words, HKB"H does not allow the rains to fall unless there is someone who recognizes and appreciates the great favor that they represent.

### "A Day on which Rain Falls Is as Momentous as the Day On which the Torah Was Given"

Based on what we have just discussed, we can begin to appreciate the fact that the Torah associates reward for the observance of mitzvos with rainfall and punishment for the neglect of Torah observance with the withholding of rainfall. In the second paragraph of the "krias shema", we read (Devorim 11, 13):

"והיה אם שמוע תשמעו אל מצוותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום... ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש ואספת דגןך ותירושך ויצהרך... השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים והשתחיתם להם, וחרה אף ה' בכם ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את יבולה" — and it will be that if you observe My mitzvos . . . then I shall provide the rain . . . and you shall bring in your grain, your wine, and your oil . . . Beware lest your heart be persuaded and you will turn away and you will serve other gods . . . Then the wrath of Hashem will be directed against you; He will restrain the heavens and there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce . . . Elsewhere, it is written (Vayikro 26, 3): "אם בחוקותי תלכו ואת מצוותי תשמרו ועשיתם אותם, ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם ונתנה הארץ יבולה ועץ השדה יתן פריו" — My precepts and observe My commandments and perform them, then I will provide your rains in their time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit

Let us propose an explanation based on what we have learned above. The observance of mitzvos stems from an obligation to show our gratitude to Hashem for taking us out of Egypt. It follows, therefore, that when we observe all of the mitzvos, it is clear that we also recognize and show HKB”H gratitude for the rains and the vegetation. Hence, the reward for Torah observance is: **“ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש ואספת דגןך ותירושך -- ויציאהרך”** then I shall provide the rain . . . and you shall bring in your grain, your wine, and your oil. Conversely, failure to observe the tenets of the Torah, chas v’shalom, demonstrating a lack of appreciation for HKB”H’s benevolence, results in: **“וחרה אף ה’ בכם”** **“--ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את יבולה”** Then the wrath of Hashem will be directed against you; He will restrain the heavens and there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce. The rains fall on the condition that we express our debt of appreciation to HKB”H.

How wonderfully this explains why our blessed sages describe the subject of rainfall in such grandiose terms (Taanis 7a): **“גדול”** **“יום הגשמים כיום שניתנה בו תורה”** — a day on which rain falls is as momentous as the day on which the Torah was given. At first glance, the association of rainfall with “Matan Torah” might seem surprising. Yet, based on what we have just discussed, it fits beautifully. The Torah was given to Yisroel, so that they would fulfill the mitzvos and could thereby express their gratitude to HKB”H. Therefore, on a day that HKB”H provides us with rain--in return for Yisroel demonstrating their appreciation and gratitude for HKB”H’s benevolence — the purpose and greatness of the giving of the Torah is realized.

**“By the Sweat of Your Brow Shall You Eat Bread”  
— the Consequence for Lacking Gratitude**

At this point, we can appreciate the element of “measure for measure” contained in the punishment HKB”H chose for Adam HaRishon in the aftermath of the sin of the Etz HaDa’as: **“וקוץ”** **“--ודרדר תצמיח לך ואכלת את עשב השדה, בזעת אפיק תאכל לחם”** Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread. In truth, this is not a new or additional punishment; it is merely the consequence and reflection of Adam’s lowly state of being. His sin demonstrated that he failed to appreciate all the kindness and favor HKB”H had performed on his behalf. He confirmed this lack of appreciation and gratitude by the remark he made concerning the woman HKB”H provided as his “ezer k’negdo”: **“האשה אשר נתתה”** **“--עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל”** The woman whom You gave to be with me — she gave me of the tree, and I ate. Therefore, it is

impossible for the rain to fall and produce vegetation from the earth without effort on man’s part. For, as we have learned, the rainfall is conditional. It requires that someone recognize and appreciate HKB”H’s benevolence concerning this gift.

Nevertheless, if man toils and labors and sweats to plow the earth and to remove the thorns and thistle in order to be able to eat bread, he will learn to appreciate HKB”H’s benevolence. He will learn to express his gratitude to HKB”H for providing the rain which allows man to produce the grain. In fact, this idea is expressed in the Birkat HaMazon. Bread is made from wheat, and according to one opinion in the Gemoreh (Beroches 40a), Adam HaRishon’s sin with the Etz HaDa’as involved wheat. So, after eating bread, we recite: **“הזן את העולם כולו בטובו בחן ובחסד”** **“-- וברחמים, הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר כי לעולם חסדו”** — Who nourishes the entire world, with His goodness, with His grace, with His kindness and with His mercy; He provides bread to all flesh — for His kindness is forever. Thus we express the fact that we recognize that HKB”H provides nourishment and sustenance for all creatures due to His infinite compassion and kindness.

Now, we stand enlightened regarding the deeper significance of our sages’ statement: **“לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו, שאין”** **“-- ברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא בשביל אשתו”** — a man should always be careful about his wife’s honor, because blessing is found in a person’s house only on account of his wife. After all, the decree that man should have to toil for his livelihood — “by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread” — stems from the lack of gratitude displayed by Adam HaRishon toward HKB”H. First, he violated a direct warning not to eat from the Etz HaDa’as; then he showed a lack of appreciation concerning the woman that was provided for him as an “ezer k’negdo”.

It is only fitting, therefore, that the tikun for these indiscretions is to respect and honor one’s wife. Doing so conveys to her that one appreciates her and recognizes the kindness of being provided with an “ezer k’negdo”. All the more so, is it necessary for us to express our thanks and appreciation to HKB”H for fashioning woman in precisely this manner--so that she should act as an “ezer k’negdo”. This understanding prompted Rava to proclaim to the people of Mechoza: **“אוקירו לנשייכו כי היכי דתתעתרו”** — honor your wives so that you may become wealthy. By honoring our wives, we demonstrate our appreciation and gratitude to HKB”H for giving us an “ezer k’negdo”. This serves as a tikun for Adam HaRishon’s ingratitude toward HKB”H. Accordingly, “berochoh” will be found in such a person’s house.

Mazal Tov To Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb  
for the birth of their baby boy beshah tovah