

Weekly Teaching

November 16, 2018

An ancient Midrash teaches that when we enter the messianic age, that animal sacrifices will not resume except for the “offering of thanksgiving”, and the only prayer that will be needed will be the “thanksgiving” prayer.

What is explicit rabbinic dogma is that we Jews, no matter the time or circumstances, will always take the time to acknowledge the blessings that can be found within our daily lives and to explicitly give thanks to God.

I regularly teach to our children that we must always cultivate our “attitude for gratitude”.

Modern science has demonstrated what the rabbis always knew; living a life by which you seek to recognize blessings and state out loud your thanks, makes people both physically and mentally more healthy.

We often don’t take advantage of the set prayers that help us rediscover the blessings within our lives but, even if this is the case, we can live by the rabbis’ declaration that we should speak aloud at least 100 blessings a day. Imagine how different our lives would be if we took the “100 blessings” obligation seriously.

No matter the tensions or challenges we confront, we would be forced to discover and say out-loud the blessings within our lives.

This isn’t simply a posture of trying to “see the glass half-full” or turning “lemons into lemonade”, but rather a re-calibration of daily living.

To begin, perhaps as a Thanksgiving activity next Thursday, pass out a blank sheet numbered 1–100 and let people write out 100 things they are grateful for and then ask everyone to share a couple of the items they wrote.

It will enrich the Thanksgiving mealtime and bring to life the power of gratitude.

If your guests need a little help to steer them, here are 10 suggestions to start with:

- Specific people you are grateful for having in your life
- Nature that creates a sense of awe
- Positive experiences
- New opportunities
- Healthy body parts
- Positive feelings
- Talents and gifts
- Food that you especially enjoy
- Religion & community
- Physical and spiritual activities

Shabbat Shalom and Happy Thanksgiving!

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