



All of the service of Hashem is dependent upon the improvement of one's character traits.

Vilna Gaon - Even Shleima, Chapter 1

Hakaras HaTov Module Packet 2

***עבודה והודאה חדא מילתא היא
רש"י : חדא מילתא היא - אף הודאה עבודה של מקום הוא***

***The Temple service and thanksgiving are one
Rashi: Thanksgiving is also a form of service of G-d.***

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah, 18a

Table of Contents

CONTACT INFORMATION	2
USE OF MATERIAL	2
ACTT <i>HAKARAS HATOV</i> MODULE – PACKET 2.....	3
GOAL OF <i>HAKARAS HATOV</i> 2 MODULE	3
MODULE DURATION	3
TO DO LIST.....	3
<i>HAKARAS HATOV</i> RESOURCES	3
WAY#50 REWARDS OF GRATITUDE BY RABBI NOAH WEINBERG.....	4
AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE BY RABBI IRWIN KATSOFF.....	7
ACTT MODULE PACKET APPENDIX.....	11
ACTT COMMITMENT FORM – <i>HAKARAS HATOV</i> 2 MODULE.....	12
ACTT LEARNING SCHEDULE	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
GLOSSARY	14

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Use of Material

The material in this *ACTT Module Packet* is intended for the use of the ACTT organization’s members and any other individuals interested in creating and sustaining meaningful changes in their lives. If an organization is interested in using this material, the ACTT organization would appreciate your contacting us. Thank you.

Version 2012-02-26

ACTT Hakaras HaTov Module – Packet 2

Goal of *Hakaras Hatov 2* Module

To develop an awareness and a mindset that recognizes all the good that one receives and appropriately thanks the Giver/giver.

Module Duration

This *Hakaras HaTov* module will be covered in one part and will last for 15 weeks.

To Do List

- If you are not yet a member of the ACTT Organization, fill out a membership application and submit it – see Membership page of www.actt613.org or ACTT Welcome Kit
- Fill out the “ACTT *Hakaras HaTov 2* Commitment Form”, keep a copy for yourself and submit a copy to the organization – see Module page of www.actt613.org or this Module Packet’s Appendix
- On a daily basis:
 - Follow the Learning Schedule and record your *Hakaras HaTov* activity/action in your “ACTT *Hakaras HaTov 2* Activity Log” in this Module Packet’s Appendix – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions
 - Record your maintenance activity/action (from the *Ahavas Chesed*, *Judging Favorably*, *Kavanah During Davening*, *Anger Management* and *Shmiras HaLashon* modules) in your “ACTT *Hakaras Hatov 2* Activity Log” in this Module Packet’s Appendix – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions
- Participate in the chizuk activities, as desired:
 - ACTT *Hakaras Hatov 2* kickoff event and face-to-face discussion group meetings
 - ACTT online discussion group and e-mail list
 - Read inspirational material from sources recommended by the ACTT organization and also distributed by the ACTT organization
 - Recommend inspirational material to the ACTT membership and submit inspirational material to be distributed to all the ACTT members

***Hakaras HaTov* Resources**

The following are some resources for learning about *Hakaras HaTov*:

- Thank You - Gratitude: Formulas, stories and insights by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin; Artscroll/Mesorah; ISBN: 1-57819-065-7
- Duties of the Heart (Chovos HaLevavos) by R. Bachya ben Joseph Ibn Paquda; Translated from Arabic into Hebrew by R. Yehuda Ibn Tibbon; English translation by Daniel Haberman; Feldheim Publishers; ISBN: 0-87306-765-7 - Introduction to Section Three: The Gate of Serving G-d (Shaar Shlishi: Shaar Avodas HaElokim)

- Audio shiurim on the Internet:
 - Gratitude by Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb at www.torahmedia.com
 - HaKaras HaTov: Recognizing the Good by Rabbi BenTzion Shafier at www.TheShmuz.com
 - Hakoros Hatov: Thanks and No Thanks by Rabbi Paysach Krohn at www.torahmedia.com
 - Koheles: Hakaras Hatov by Rabbi Moshe Eisemann at www.torahmedia.com
 - The Challenge of Appreciation by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig at www.torahmedia.com

Way #50 Rewards of Gratitude

by Rabbi Noah Weinberg

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<http://www.aish.com/sp/48w/48942721.html>

Acknowledge your gifts and be grateful to the source. Because if you know from whom you're receiving, you can always go back for more.

After hearing a good story, joke, or idea, we're anxious to repeat it to others. But in doing so, the tendency is to present it as our own original invention.

Ha'omer davar bi'shaim omro literally means "say it in the name of the one who said it." Whenever quoting something, you should always acknowledge the source. In other words, "don't steal credit."

The Talmud, the classical book of wisdom, goes to great lengths to trace the intellectual lineage of an idea: "So-and-so said in the name of So-and-so, who said in the name of So-and-so."

So next time you're ready to share a juicy one, don't forget to mention: Where did you get it from?

THE GIFT OF WISDOM

In order to properly appreciate anything, we need to assess its value. That's why when someone gives us a material gift, we usually have no problem showing gratitude.

The 48 Ways says: Acknowledge spiritual gifts, too. Wisdom is certainly more valuable than gold, and the secret of happiness is more precious than a diamond!

As an exercise, make a list of the ideas you regularly espouse, along with the original sources you heard them from. Think of people who gave you wisdom for living. Did a friend set you straight on something? Your brother saved you from doing some stupid things? An employer gave you good career advice?

Acknowledge that you received the gift. If someone took the blinders off your eyes, it's fantastic, it's a different life. Say to yourself: "I am now aware of something very important that I wasn't paying attention to." Say it out loud. That alone will make you feel genuine appreciation.

Now, let the source know how much you appreciate it. Consider as if the "thank you" is payment for the good idea. Enjoy paying this debt, don't loathe paying it. The pleasure that you'll give the other person is small payback for such an enormous gift!

A good place to start is with your parents. Make a list of all the gifts they've given you, both materially and ethically -- your sense of honesty, discipline, desire for truth, kindness toward people. Appreciate how valuable each one of these is. Come on, what did you get from your parents? Find out.

Next, write your parents a letter, thanking them for these gifts. It sounds a bit corny, but it is awesomely powerful. Do you understand what enormous pleasure you'll give them? Plus what pleasure you'll have in giving them that pleasure?!

VALUE THE SOURCE

When you acknowledge the source, you don't lose, you win. You will never be able to appreciate a piece of wisdom, an insight into living, unless you are willing to acknowledge the gift. Because by denying the gift, you downgrade its value. Therefore you won't apply it seriously -- because to you it doesn't have value.

Furthermore, if you are consciously aware of where your wisdom is coming from, then you're much more likely to go get more.

Direct others to the source as well. Let everybody know. When somebody else is happy, it doesn't steal any happiness from you. Actually, the more people who are happy, the easier it is for you to be happy.

When there's more wisdom around, the greater life becomes for us all.

WARNING SIGNS

Why do people have a hard time acknowledging someone else as the source of an idea?

The reality is that people crave independence, and are grappling for status and one-upmanship. Debts to others seem to threaten that stature. We don't like to imagine that we weren't smart enough to "figure it out for ourselves."

In truth, independence means that you pay your debts.

What does this tell us? Whenever you feel the need to take credit for someone else's work, alarm bells should ring. It's a warning sign of insecurity. Because even though it may "make us look good," it's actually a cheap substitute for legitimate self-improvement.

If you want credit for a good idea, think of one yourself!

Beyond this, if others find out about your "theft," then you've lost credibility in their eyes. And even if no one else finds out, you've damaged your self-respect. These are hard commodities to get back.

Give credit where credit is due. People will respect you for it, and you'll feel good about yourself -- even better than if you'd taken the credit!

TRACK DOWN OPINIONS

There is a more subtle dynamic at play here. Sometimes we pick up prevalent ideas in society, and walk around presenting them as our own conclusions.

Make a list of your opinions on subjects like free will, absolute truth, evolution, abortion, etc. Track down the source of each. Are they your original ideas? If not, where did they come from? Did you read a magazine article, or a friend impressed you? How did you reach your conclusion?

Don't fool yourself. Recognize that once your ego is invested, you're not looking at the evidence, pro and con. You're just "defending your conclusion." And the inherent danger is obvious: Deep down, we're not sure whether or not we believe it.

For example, you may believe "there is no absolute truth." Instead, try rephrasing it: "**People say** there is no absolute truth." This way, you're free to investigate the idea objectively, without being locked into a position.

Now shift the question a bit deeper: Why did you choose to identify with these particular ideas in the first place?

Next time you hear a discussion of a controversial topic, resist the temptation to accept an idea just to feel that you've "settled the issues of living." Defer a conclusion until you've heard all the evidence. Otherwise it's pretending, play-acting, not really living.

Can you ever be sure of a conclusion? Yes! The 48 Ways says: Learn the dynamics of clarity and study how the dimension of knowledge works. Then you'll feel the surety when it comes.

GRATITUDE TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Make a list of society's treasures -- monotheism, justice for all, universal education, dignity of the individual, preciousness of life. These core values of the civilized world are all from the Torah.

Before the Torah was given, people built their lives on a subjective concept of right and wrong. Then at Mount Sinai, human history underwent a dynamic shift. People understood that there is one God who has moral expectations. You can't just live as you please; there is a higher authority you are accountable to.

Despite the fact that Jews were never more than a tiny fraction of the world's population, these ideas became the basis for the civilized world. For example, do you know the source of the idea "*Love your neighbor as yourself*"?

It's in the Five Books of Moses -- Leviticus 19:18.

The Jewish people are an eminent firm, 3,500 years old. We are no fly-by-night. The world uses our products under different brand names and takes it for granted. Consider what humanity owes to the Jewish people.

If you are living with Jewish wisdom, know it, quote it, and give credit.

GRATITUDE TO THE ALMIGHTY

More than all, give credit to the Almighty. He gave us a brain to understand and appreciate wisdom. Other teachers enlighten us, but the original teacher is God. He implanted within us the intuition to discover all there is to know about living.

God is showering us with gifts all the time. Food, air, eyes, teeth. Life itself. He programmed us with an antenna for wisdom. Nothing is possible without God.

The problem is that we don't want to be indebted to Him, so we deny the gifts. We refuse to believe that He loves us.

It's like the son who doesn't want to acknowledge the gift of a new Porsche. He's going to say it's the wrong color, it has a dent, it guzzles gas. He'll find something wrong with it because he doesn't want to acknowledge the debt.

In order to connect with God, you have to learn to appreciate all the good He has done for you. That means giving up the illusion that you alone are responsible for your achievements. It's all a gift from God. Just as every stroke of Picasso's brush has his signature on it, everything in this world has God's signature on it. We have to learn to appreciate it.

If you make the effort to appreciate the gifts God has bestowed upon you, then you'll have such a keen awareness of God's presence that everything you do is accompanied by a sense of His love and guidance. You'll be overwhelmed above and beyond any other pleasure possible.

That's why gratitude is the ultimate appreciation, the 50th Way to Wisdom. This is the step that unifies all the others. So start loving God. Acknowledge His great and many gifts.

WHY IS "REWARDS OF GRATITUDE" AN INGREDIENT IN WISDOM?

- Make a list of things that you quote. Know where you got them, and give credit.
- If you downgrade the source of your wisdom, you downgrade the value of the wisdom.
- Tools for living are more valuable than any car, stereo, or trip around the world. Acknowledge the debt.
- When gratitude to others breaks down, then so does society as a whole.
- Turn the tables: If it was your idea, wouldn't you want credit?

An Attitude of Gratitude #2

by Rabbi Irwin Katsof

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<http://www.aish.com/sp/pr/48942176.html>

When we are grateful for God's gifts, He only wants to give us more.

A good friend of mine, Motty, suffered a minor stroke recently. While in the middle of a speech, he suddenly experienced total blindness in one eye. It didn't hurt and he finished what he had to say.

Leisurely, he returned home, but since he still couldn't see out of the one eye, he decided it was best to call a doctor. The doctor told him to get himself to the hospital immediately.

There Motty learned that he had experienced a stroke, and although his eyesight returned within hours, he was warned that he was not out of the woods yet. A stroke often has aftershocks, and all that medicine can do is watch and wait.

Frightened by what was happening, Motty prayed as hard as he knew how, promising God all the while that he would be a better person. He was most fortunate that there were no further repercussions, and he went home totally unimpaired by what had happened.

Filled with gratitude to God for having healed him, he realized that, as a result of the bargains and promises he made, he was now on his way to becoming a much better human being.

Then he realized that he had to be grateful to God for that, too.

And suddenly it hit him: God loved him so much, wanted him to be the best he could be so much, that He had sent him the frightening experience of a stroke to make sure he got on with his self-improvement program.

And only then did he realize what he really needed to be grateful for -- not so much for the healing, but for the stroke! Suddenly, gratitude took on a whole new meaning for him.

APPRECIATING THE MUNDANE

An attitude of gratitude -- that is, being grateful for *everything* God sends us -- is a key to praying effectively. And it is a quality that takes some effort to cultivate on a daily basis.

One of my teachers, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, in his book "Gateway to Happiness", relates the story of a man who one day decided to spend a few minutes appreciating his morning cup of coffee. It was a part of his daily routine and, God forbid, if something went wrong and he had to go without it, he sure missed it.

As he began to ponder this cup of coffee, he jotted down his thoughts. First of all he noted that coffee beans grew in Brazil, and someone had to plant the trees and tend them until the coffee beans reached maturity. Then workers had to pick the beans from the trees. Then beans had to be roasted and ground and packed for shipping. There was tremendous work involved in the shipping industry, which allowed the coffee to reach the United States -- this alone required hundreds of people. Finally, the coffee beans arrived in his grocery store.

But that was not all. The water for the coffee was boiled on a gas range and the story of the manufacture and delivery of that appliance into his kitchen could easily fill a book. Then there was the gas, the water, and the kettle that whistled to let him know the water had boiled. The match couldn't be left out. He drank his coffee with milk, so the dairy industry had to be considered and all the work involved from the time the milk left the cow until it reached his coffee cup.

At the end of writing furiously for a half-hour, the man had not even begun to describe the cup, saucer and teaspoon he used, the table he placed them on, or the chair he sat in.

For the first time, he became aware of the thousands of people whose work was necessary for him to have that cup of coffee. This awareness led him to a most intense spiritual experience. His prayers for the next few weeks were permeated with a deep feeling of gratitude to his fellow human beings all of whom made it possible for him to exist on this planet.

APPRECIATING LIFE

Now, that's what appreciating a cup of coffee did for this man. But what about all the things that had happened that same morning *before* he even came into the kitchen?

These same things happen to all of us in much the same order, and we can easily imagine the sequence of events: First, he woke up -- there, he was alive! He opened his eyes and watched the objects in his bedroom come into focus. Yes, he had eyesight. Then he moved his hand to rub his eyes. For his hand to move, thousands of electrical and chemical changes had to take place in his body and travel from his brain to his arm.

He looked at the alarm clock, "Oh boy, I better get going." He didn't give it a second thought that everything in his body was functioning just fine -- he had eyesight, he had mobility, he had consciousness.

God made sure that he had all these things, but he took them for granted each and every day much the same way he had taken his coffee for granted.

When his coffee wasn't there one morning, he missed it. He appreciated it more when he was deprived of it, when he had run out of coffee beans, or the oven malfunctioned and he couldn't boil water. How much more would he have missed his eyesight, his limbs, his mind!

Just think where you'd be without those seemingly simple gifts. According to government statistics, 50,000 Americans are blinded each year -- that means *one every minute*! So eyesight is nothing to be taken for granted, as my friend Motty learned from his short experience with temporary blindness.

APPRECIATING GOD

The saying goes: "There for the grace of God, go I." Indeed that is so true. God is looking out for you every second of the day. Yet, we just assume when things are going well, that this is how it should be.

But we can't take anything for granted, as just a cursory look around should tell us. Therefore, reminding ourselves that eyesight, mobility, consciousness and freedom come from God awakens our appreciation for His love and care, which are as infinite as God is Himself.

This is why the Sages advise that, before we start beseeching God with a long litany of our requests, we should acknowledge all that He has done for us already.

The *Siddur*, the Jewish prayer book, drawing on a tradition two-thousand years old, lists blessings to be said each morning over life's essentials:

Blessed are You Lord, our God, Ruler of the Universe ... Who gives sight to the blind ... Who releases the imprisoned ... Who straightens the bent ... Who guides the steps of man ... Who gives strength to the weary ... Who provided me with all my needs...

Beginning each day with such a reminder might go a long way toward not taking God for granted.

When we appreciate what we've already been given, God will want to give us more.

ACTT Module Packet Appendix



ACTT Commitment Form – Hakaras Hatov 2 Module

Remember, it is better to commit to less – you can always do more!

Please PRINT all information

This commitment does not constitute a vow; I am doing the following, bli neder

From ___/___/___ To ___/___/___

In memory of _____

As a zechus for:

a refuah shelaimah for _____

a shidduch for _____

parnassa for _____

other _____

- ___ *Hakaras HaTov act(s) daily in a ☺ mood*
(ACTT recommends 1-2 acts daily – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions)
- *Performing one or more of the following maintenance activities in a ☺ mood*
(ACTT recommends a total of 1-2 acts daily – the *ACTT Activity/Action Ideas* has suggestions)
 - ___ *Ahavas Chesed act(s)* *daily or* *weekly*
 - ___ *Judging Favorably act(s)* *daily or* *weekly*
 - ___ *Kavanah During Davening act(s)* *daily or* *weekly*
 - ___ *Anger Management act(s)* *daily or* *weekly*
 - ___ *Shmiras HaLashon act(s)* *daily or* *weekly*
- *Learning ___ minutes daily from* (ACTT recommends 5 minutes daily):
 - The ACTT *Hakaras Hatov 2 Learning Schedule Book* (see *ACTT Daily Activity Log*)
 - Other _____

Please PRINT all information

Name: _____ Date _____

Email address: _____ Tel. number _____

Address: _____

☺ *Be happy with your ability to Improve Yourself and Grow!* ☺

Please email form: commitment@actt613.org or mail: ACTT, 48 Edgemount Road, Edison, NJ 08817



Gratitude Module 2 Learning Schedule

Source Book: The Garden of Gratitude
by Rabbi Shalom Arush

I am dedicating today's learning of this sefer:

In memory of _____

As a zechus for:

a refuah shelaimah for _____

a shidduch for _____

parnassa for _____

other _____

Learning Schedule

Date	Pages	Date	Pages	Date	Pages	Date	Pages				
Mon	02/27/12	21-23	Fri	03/30/12	98-100	Tue	05/01/12	169-173	Sat	06/02/12	264-267
Tue	02/28/12	24-27	Sat	03/31/12	100-102	Wed	05/02/12	174-177	Sun	06/03/12	268-271
Wed	02/29/12	27-30	Sun	04/01/12	103-105	Thu	05/03/12	177-179	Mon	06/04/12	271-274
Thu	03/01/12	30-32	Mon	04/02/12	105-106	Fri	05/04/12	179-181	Tue	06/05/12	275-278
Fri	03/02/12	32-34	Tue	04/03/12	106-108	Sat	05/05/12	182-184	Wed	06/06/12	278-281
Sat	03/03/12	34-36	Wed	04/04/12	108-110	Sun	05/06/12	184-187	Thu	06/07/12	281-283
Sun	03/04/12	37-39	Thu	04/05/12	110-112	Mon	05/07/12	188-190	Fri	06/08/12	283-286
Mon	03/05/12	39-41	Fri	04/06/12	113-116	Tue	05/08/12	190-194	Sat	06/09/12	287-290
Tue	03/06/12	41-44	Sat	04/07/12	116-118	Wed	05/09/12	195-198	Sun	06/10/12	290-294
Wed	03/07/12	45-47	Sun	04/08/12	118-120	Thu	05/10/12	198-200	Mon	06/11/12	294-298
Thu	03/04/12	47-50	Mon	04/05/12	120-122	Fri	05/11/12	201-204	Tue	06/12/12	299-302
Fri	03/05/12	50-52	Tue	04/10/12	122-124	Sat	05/12/12	204-207	Wed	06/13/12	302-305
Sat	03/10/12	53-54	Wed	04/11/12	124-126	Sun	05/13/12	208-211	Thu	06/14/12	305-308
Sun	03/11/12	55-57	Thu	04/12/12	126-128	Mon	05/14/12	212-215	Fri	06/15/12	308-312
Mon	03/12/12	57-58	Fri	04/13/12	128-131	Tue	05/15/12	215-218	Sat	06/16/12	313-317
Tue	03/13/12	58-63	Sat	04/14/12	131-133	Wed	05/16/12	218-222	Sun	06/17/12	318-322
Wed	03/14/12	63-64	Sun	04/15/12	133-134	Thu	05/17/12	222-224	Wed	06/18/12	323-327
Thu	03/15/12	64-67	Mon	04/16/12	135-136	Fri	05/18/12	224-226	Sat	06/19/12	327-329
Fri	03/16/12	67-69	Tue	04/17/12	136-138	Sat	05/19/12	227-230	Sun	06/20/12	330-334
Sat	03/17/12	70-72	Wed	04/18/12	138-141	Sun	05/20/12	230-233	Mon	06/21/12	334-338
Sun	03/18/12	72-75	Thu	04/19/12	141-143	Mon	05/21/12	233-235	Tue	06/22/12	338-341
Mon	03/19/12	75-77	Fri	04/20/12	144-146	Tue	05/22/12	236-238	Wed	06/23/12	341-346
Tue	03/20/12	77-80	Sat	04/21/12	146-147	Wed	05/23/12	238-241	Thu	06/24/12	347-350
Wed	03/21/12	80-82	Sun	04/22/12	147-149	Thu	05/24/12	241-243	Fri	06/25/12	350-354
Thu	03/22/12	82-84	Mon	04/23/12	149-151	Fri	05/25/12	243-245	Sat	06/26/12	354-357
Fri	03/23/12	85-86	Tue	04/24/12	151-153	Sat	05/26/12	246-249	Sun	06/27/12	357-360
Sat	03/24/12	87-89	Wed	04/25/12	153-156	Sun	05/27/12	249-251	Mon	06/28/12	361-364
Sun	03/25/12	89-91	Thu	04/26/12	156-158	Mon	05/28/12	251-254	Tue	06/29/12	364-367
Mon	03/26/12	91-92	Fri	04/27/12	159-161	Tue	05/29/12	254-256	Wed	06/30/12	367-370
Tue	03/27/12	92-94	Sat	04/28/12	161-163	Wed	05/30/12	256-259	Thu	07/01/12	370-372
Wed	03/28/12	94-96	Sun	04/29/12	163-166	Thu	05/31/12	259-262	Fri	07/02/12	372-375
Thu	03/29/12	96-98	Mon	04/30/12	167-169	Fri	06/01/12	262-264	Sat	07/03/12	375-377

Glossary

Ahavas Chesed	.....loving kindness
B'li Neder	.....without making a formal commitment
Bitachon	.....trust in Hashem
Chesed	.....kindness
Chizuk	.....moral support
Davening	.....praying
Hakaras HaTov	.....gratitude
Kavanah	.....concentration
Klal Yisrael	.....the Jewish people
Lashon Hara	.....evil tongue (speech) - any derogatory or damaging (physically, financially, socially, or stress-inducing) communication
Midah, Midos	.....character trait, character traits
Mitzvah	.....a commandment
Mussar	.....ethical teaching
Neshamah	.....soul
Nisayon	.....a test
Ona'as Devarim	.....causing hurt through the spoken word
Parnasa	.....livelihood
Rechilus	.....gossip-mongering - any communication that generates animosity between people
Refuah Shleimah	.....a complete recovery from an illness
Sefer	.....a book
Shidduch	.....a match of two eligible and marriageable Jewish singles
Shiurim	.....classes
Shmiras HaLashon	.....guarding one's tongue
Siddur	.....prayer book
Siyata D'Shmaya	.....Divine Assistance
Talmid, Talmidim	.....student, students
Tefillah, Tefillos	.....prayer, prayers
Teshuva	.....repentance
Zechus	.....merit