

## “Hakarat Hatov”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

Years ago the *London Jewish Chronicle* carried a story after the Second World War about a bereaved mother and father donating a beautiful stained glass window in memory of their son who was killed in the war. During the service, another mother whispered to her husband, “Let’s do the same thing for our son.” The husband was shocked. “What do you mean? Our boy is still alive.”

“Of course,” said the mother, “that’s what I mean. Let’s show our thankfulness that he came home safe and well.”

*Hakarat Hatov*, gratitude, is a profound religious emotion. We sit in the sukkah and are grateful for our homes. We begin the Torah anew and are grateful for the gift of God’s word. At a time of loss, we mourn; but all the time that precedes it, when we are in possession of blessing, of life, of love, should we not be grateful?

As Rav teaches in the Talmud, we should give thanks for the ability to give thanks. The very first words we are to speak in the morning are “*modeh ani*” — I am grateful to You. Beginning the day with thanks, our eyes are attuned to blessing and our spirit renewed.