

Rabbi David Hanania Pinto

E-mail : kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



ע"ה דוד חנניה פינטו

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Appreciation

The first three plagues that the Egyptians suffered were not brought about by Moshe Rabbeinu but by Ahron HaKohen. Rashi explains the reason for this: *"Because the Nile protected Moshe when he was placed in it, therefore it was not smitten by him not with the plague of Blood and not with the plague of Frogs, but by Ahron"*.

Ahron HaKohen, and not Moshe, also struck the dust of the land with the plague of Lice which brought lice throughout Egypt. Here too Rashi explains the reason for this: *"Moshe Rabbeinu could not smite the dust because it protected him from discovery when he used it to conceal the Egyptian that he killed, therefore it was smitten by Ahron"*.

In this vein, Chazal tell us (Baba Kama 92b), *"Do not throw stones into a well from which you have drunk"*. Meaning, if you benefit from something, even if it is an inanimate object, you must accord honor to the object that did you a favor, and G-d forbid for you to repay it with evil for the good.

This is something we need to understand because is it really possible to show appreciation to something inanimate? Hashem Who created the water, the Nile, the dust of the land, and everything in this world, is the One who commanded them to protect Moshe when he was placed in a basket in the water and hid the Egyptian in its sand. They themselves have no wisdom or choice whether to act in a certain way. If so, why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to show them appreciation, for could they have done anything differently?

The answer seems to be that the attribute of appreciation (*hakarat hatov*) is not only requisite regarding the one who benefitted him, but is for the person's own good, for if he does not show appreciation this causes a blemish in his feelings. A person who denies good that is done to him by an inani-

mate object or growing thing, will eventually also come to deny the good that Hashem does for him, for this is the nature of man. If he becomes accustomed to denying the good that he receives, it no longer makes a difference to him if he received the good from a living person, an inanimate object or an organic item. As Chazal say (Shemot Rabba 1), *"Anyone who denies the good done by his friend will eventually deny the good from Hashem."* Therefore, it is fitting to show appreciation even towards an inanimate object that benefits us, for in this way we will become accustomed to showing appreciation to all those who benefit us.

Once upon arrival in Eretz Yisrael, soon after I had left the aircraft, I suddenly noticed that I had left my reading glasses behind on the plane. This caused me much aggravation because even though it involved only a small sum, the trouble of ordering new glasses and waiting for them to be ready would waste my time that was already overloaded with seeing to so many public needs and delivering Torah shiurim.

I raised my eyes heavenward and declared, *"Master of the World, it is true that these glasses are not very valuable but I feel appreciation towards them. They help me learn Your Torah, through them I can investigate the words of Chazal and understand them well; without them I cannot learn. Please, I beg of You, return them to me somehow, for nothing is difficult for You"...* This is how I prayed to Hashem and indeed I saw the fulfillment of the verse, *"Before they call I will answer"*.

Hashem heard my prayer and that same evening someone called my secretary, Mr. Amos, and told him that he was sitting near us in the plane and had found my glasses. He could not find us in the airport but now he wishes to return them.

David Chananya Pinto