

HA KARAS HA TOV: RECOGNIZING THE GOOD

Background

The messenger who was to take the Jewish Nation out of Mitzrayim, bring them to Sinai to receive the Torah, and lead them for forty years in the desert was Moshe Rabbeinu. As the leader, it was appropriate for him to be the one to bring the *makkos* onto the Egyptian people. And in fact, the majority of the *makkos* were initiated by Moshe. Yet HASHEM told Moshe that the first few *makkos* should be brought by Aharon since these involved hitting the Nile, and the Nile had protected Moshe as an infant. Therefore, it would be a lack of *hakaras hatov* – recognition of the good – for Moshe to be the one to strike the water.

Questions

The Rosh Yeshiva observed that since water is an inanimate object without sense, feelings, or memory, it cannot feel any lack of gratitude. In fact, it wouldn't discern whether an individual is hitting it or not. Therefore, it couldn't possibly feel any slight. In what sense would it be a lack of *hakaras hatov* for Moshe to hit the water?

ספר שמות פרק ז

וַיֹּאמֶר יְדֹדְךָ אֶל מֹשֶׁה אָמַר
אֶל אֶהְרֹן קַח מַטֵּךְ וְגִטָּה יְדֹדְךָ
עַל מַיִם מִצְרַיִם עַל נְהַרְתָּם
עַל יַאֲרֵיהֶם וְעַל אֲגַמְיָהֶם וְעַל
כָּל מְקוֹה מַיִמֵיהֶם וַיְהִי דָם
וְהָיָה דָם בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וּבְעַצְמֵים וּבְאֲבָנִים

And HASHEM said to Moshe, “Say to Aharon, “Take your staff and stretch your hand over the waters of Egypt and their rivers, and their lakes, and their ponds, and all of their gatherings of water, and it will be blood, and there will be blood in all of the land of Egypt, and in the stones and in the rocks.”

רש"י על שמות פרק ז פסוק יט

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל אֶהְרֹן - לְפִי
שֶׁהֵגִין הַיָּאֹר עַל מֹשֶׁה
כְּשֶׁנִּשְׁלַח לְתוֹכּוֹ לְפִיכֶךְ לֹא
לָקָה עַל יְדוֹ לֹא בְּדָם וְלֹא
בְּצַפְרָדַעִים וְלָקָה עַל יְדֵי
אֶהְרֹן

Say to Aharon: – *Because the river protected Moshe when he was placed in it, he did not hit it – not in the plague of blood, nor in the plague of frogs. Rather, Aharon hit it.*