

"Come and I will send you to Pharaoh that you shall bring forth My people." (3:10)

If Hashem wanted the Jews to leave Egypt, surely He could have arranged it in the twinkling of an eye. Certainly nothing could stand in the way of the Supreme Master of the world! Why then did he send Moshe to Pharaoh to plead with him to allow the Jews to leave Egypt? Why was it deemed necessary to send one plague after another to induce Pharaoh into agreement? What purpose did Moshe serve by constantly returning to this most obstinate ruler?

We may suggest that herein lies the important lesson of *hakoras hatov* (the obligation to acknowledge and appreciate a favor and show gratitude). The Jews came to Egypt during a time of crisis and famine. Although Yosef gathered and stored food it ultimately belonged to Pharaoh. The Jews were able to move to Egypt to be sustained during this famine only through his gracious consent. They, therefore, owed a debt of gratitude to the country and ruler who gave them refuge. Even though the Egyptians subjected them to the most cruel forms of servitude and affliction, *Klal Yisrael* had a moral imperative to repay this debt honorably. It would have been wrong to simply leave without royal permission. The importance of nurturing this most important attribute takes precedence over everything, even at the expense of our suffering. Our experience in Egypt can serve to emphasize this profound message, so that *Klal Yisrael* would continue to develop into a "holy nation".