

## And he left Pharaoh's presence in a burning anger. (11:9)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* finally became angry with Pharaoh, whose irrational, egotistical obstinacy was endangering his entire country. Pharaoh was playing games with Moshe. First, no; then, yes; then, who will go? Finally, when Pharaoh told Moshe not to return unless he despaired for his life, Moshe replied, "I will no longer see your face." Despite Moshe's justified anger, he still spoke respectfully to Pharaoh. Indeed, he told Pharaoh that, at the next plague, it will be his slaves who will be coming to him, pleading for an end to the plague. In the end, it was Pharaoh, accompanied by his slaves, who came to Moshe and "ordered" him to take the Jews and leave. If Moshe knew that Pharaoh would come to him, why did he not mention it when he told Pharaoh, "All your slaves will plead with me to stop?" It was Pharaoh who was begging for it to stop. Apparently, it would not have been respectful to Pharaoh's honor for Moshe to speak to the king of Egypt in such a demeaning manner.

*Rashi* comments, *Chileik kavod l'malchus*, "Moshe honored the monarchy of Pharaoh." Anyone who reads this must be amazed. Pharaoh redefined the term evil/wicked. He persecuted the Jews in a manner that demonstrated his perverted sense of value for human life. Yet, Moshe was enjoined to preserve Pharaoh's esteem, because he was a king. At first glance, this comes across as enigmatic. It is not as if Pharaoh was himself having a field day while his subjects were absolutely not! When the Egyptians' bodies became infested with frogs, the only sound one heard from Pharaoh and his nation was "ribbit" (or whatever sound frogs make). The lice and boils made their bodies look and feel like a disaster area. What dignity could Pharaoh have left?

*Horav Leib Chasman, zl*, derives from here that Hashem is exacting in His punishment. A person will not receive an iota more than he deserves. Hashem's goal in meting out punishment is not revenge, but rather education. He wants the villain to learn what he did wrong and why he is being punished. To destroy whatever esteem Pharaoh had would be, from an educational perspective, counterintuitive. If he would lose his mind due to depression, he could not develop a cognitive awareness of his deep-rooted evil and its warranted punishment.

The *Mashgiach* (Lomza) adds, "From here, we may derive a lesson concerning our personal attitude *vis-à-vis kavod ha'adam*, the esteem of a man. We must bear in mind that, even if it is necessary to punish him, we do so respectfully, carefully weighing each and every word which we say to him. Indeed, if Moshe was enjoined to maintain the self-esteem of the *rasha merusha* Pharaoh, how much more so must we be careful not to offend our fellow – even one who deserves the punishment."

In summation, we show respect to someone who, as a result of his station in life, is due such honor – despite his negative actions towards others. We do not negate his achievements, nor do we turn a blind eye to the evil. We separate them one from another – the good from the bad, maintaining a balance.