



## The Baba Sali's Expression of Gratitude

### Parshas Bo

#### Leilui Neshmas Meira Chaya Nechama Bracha A"H

#### Bat David Mordechai V'Zelda Shaindel Sheychu

Rabbi Yosef Deutch was an extremely pious Jew from Jerusalem. I merited having a close relationship with him and witnessing his incredible deeds. He established many Torah institutions, and today there is a charity named after him. Rabbi Yosef was a close associate of the Baba Sali. The Baba Sali respected him very much, he would light up every time he met Rabbi Yosef.

Rabbi Yosef received a phone call one day from Rabbi David Frankfurter, a magistrate in the religious courts in Paris. He painfully told Rabbi Yosef that his wife had lost consciousness and was in critical condition. He asked him to go to the Baba Sali and ask him to pray for mercy for his wife.

Rabbi Yosef took his *Teffilin*, his phylacteries, and left for Netivot to meet the Baba Sali. The Baba Sali received him warmly and inquired about his visit. Rabbi Yosef told him about Rabbi Frankfurter's wife. The Baba Sali's countenance changed, becoming serious and almost menacing. Rabbi Yosef sensed that this was a difficult request, and that the woman's sentence had been passed already in the Heavens. Rabbi Yosef continued to implore on the behalf of his friends. The Baba Sali's expression abruptly changed again, "Whose daughter is she?" the Baba Sali inquired, "She is the daughter of Rabbi Dr. Chaim Shlomo Kalitski", Rabbi Yosef replied. "I am in debt to him, the doctor helped me when I had difficulty with my eyes", said the Baba Sali.

Rabbi Yosef knew that the Baba Sali never remained bound to a debt. "She must become healthy", the Baba Sali ruled. The threat has been removed. A sigh of relief was heard in the room.

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We actually learn the concept of gratitude from the animals, specifically from the dog and the donkey. In our weekly Parsha, the Torah praises the dogs for not harming the Jewish Nation as they were leaving Egypt: "But to all the children of Israel, not one dog will whet its tongue against either man or beast."<sup>1</sup>

What was their reward? "And flesh torn in the field you shall not eat; you shall throw it to the dog."<sup>2</sup> Why is it thrown to the dogs? The midrash answers: "G-d said: you are in debt to the dogs, for during the time that I killed the Egyptians first born and they were involved with their burial throughout the night the dogs barked at them, but they did not bark at the Jews, as it is stated: "But to all the children of Israel, not one dog will whet its tongue". Therefore,

you are in debt to the dogs, as it is stated: "You shall throw it to the dog".<sup>3</sup>

We are in debt not only to the dogs. The donkey is rewarded for carrying the Israelites burden as they exited from Egypt. "Said Rabbi Chanina: I asked Rabbi Eliezer in the great School of Learning 'Why were the first-born of donkeys different from the first-born of horses and camels?' — He replied: 'It is a decree of Scripture'. Moreover, the donkeys helped the Israelites when they departed from Egypt, for there was not an Israelite who did not possess ninety Libyan donkeys laden with the silver and gold of Egypt".<sup>4</sup>



One may ask: why did the donkey merit a dear mitzvah, as opposed to the dog who has the flesh thrown to him? This teaches you that there are various levels of gratitude: the dog, which only remained silent, receives some flesh and some bones, as opposed to the donkey, which silently carried its burden and became part of the exodus, received a unique mitzvah which it is part of.

If G-d expresses gratitude towards dogs and donkeys, all the more so one should express gratitude towards a person who does one a favor.

This was the way of the Baba Sali, he never remained in debt to anyone who did him a favor throughout his life.

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Rabbi Yosef returned to Jerusalem, keeping in mind the exact time that the Baba Sali blessed the ill woman, promising her full recovery. When he entered his home he was told that Rabbi Frankfurter had been trying to contact him for some time. Rabbi Frankfurter sounded jubilant over the phone. "Thank G-d, the righteous decrees and G-d executes his will".

"When did she recover?", Rabbi Yosef asked, "Before noon", Rabbi Frankfurter replied. "At what time exactly?" Rabbi Yosef persisted, "At eleven thirty". The was the exact time that the Baba Sali blessed the woman, Rabbi Yosef noted happily, and told of the righteous' expression of gratitude, which turned judgment into clemency and gave the woman a new life.

<sup>1</sup> Shmot, 11, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Shmot, 22, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Shmot Rabbah, 31,9.

<sup>4</sup> Tractate Bechorot, 5b.