

פרשת בא

בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי את לבו למען שתי אותותי אלה בקרבנו [יא]

We find in this Parsha and in Parshas Vaera how Hashem hardened פרעה's heart and refused to let the Jews go free. The מפרשים try to understand why Hashem hardened to heart of פרעה and did not allow him to do תשובה. Furthermore if his בחירה, his free will was taken away from him, how could Hashem punish him for his actions?

The Beis Halevi (סוף פ' שמות) explains it in the following way. There is a fundamental difference between a Jew and a גוי. When a Jew does תשובה even if it is through יסורים and suffering, his תשובה is still accepted. Although there is an element of coercion and force, Hashem still considers his תשובה to be sincere. A גוי on the other hand, if his תשובה is done after receiving punishment, Hashem may not accept it. The difference is, that a Jew's רצון הפנימי, inner desire is to do the רצון ה'. It is only because of the יצר הרע or other outside influences that cause him to sin. The יסורים that come upon him serve as a means to overcome these influences and allow his רצון הפנימי to come to the forefront. However a גוי does not have the inner desire to do the will of Hashem. On the contrary he would rather continue doing the עבירה. The only thing that is stopping him is the יסורים that he has to endure. Once the suffering goes away he will revert back to his old ways. Hashem understood that פרעה did not really intend to let the Jews free. It was merely his desire to rid himself of the מכות. Hashem therefore took away פרעה's fear of the מכות and strengthened his level of endurance of suffering to allow פרעה's inner desire to remain as before.

The message of the Beis Halevi relates to us as well. We must recognize that our inner desire as well is to do the רצון ה'. Bearing this in mind will help us focus on overcoming any outside influences that may come our way and bring us closer to our goal of being באמת ה' עובד ה', true servants of Hashem.

Have a good Shabbos.

Rabbi Yitzchok Davis

Kollel Merkaz Hatorah Beverly Hills, CA