



Parshas Bo / פרשת בא תשפ"א / בסייעתא דשמיא

”ויאמר ד' אל משה בא אל פרעה...” שמות י:א

“And Hashem said to Moshe, come to Pharaoh...” Shemos 10:1

Parshas Bo begins with a non sequitur. Hashem tells Moshe to address Pharaoh, but does not mention a word of what he is to tell him. Moshe then warns Pharaoh of the locust swarm on the horizon, however we do not find that Hashem told Moshe explicitly that *מכת ארבה* was to be the next plague.

The Ramban explains how Moshe Rabbeinu understood on his own that Hashem meant to bring the locusts. *מכת ארבה* is hinted to in the next pasuk, “ולמען תספר בעזני בנך וכן בנך את אשר התעללתי במצרים” - “And in order that you shall tell over to your children and grandchildren how I played around with the Egyptians...” We know that there was another locust plague in our history; it occurred during the times of Yoel the Prophet. The pasuk with regard to that episode states “...עלי לבניכם ספרו ובניכם לבניהם...” that we shall tell over the story to our children in such a fashion that they will be inspired to relate the tale to *their* children. Moshe Rabbeinu therefore understood that Hashem was about to bring *מכת ארבה* to מצרים as a harbinger to the plague that would occur in later times.

The Kli Yakar gives a specific reason why Hashem did not clearly delineate *מכת ארבה* to Moshe in His command to relate the message to Pharaoh. Hashem wanted Moshe to give Pharaoh *מוסר* for his imbecility. Up until this point, Pharaoh never acquiesced to the word of Hashem of his own accord; he was merely beaten into submission by the force of the Plagues. The Kli Yakar explains that *Teshuva* that a person performs because he is forced into it is not *תשובה שלימה* – a complete repentance, for as soon as the pressure is removed, the person will revert to his perverted ways, as was the case with Pharaoh. Therefore, Hashem did not openly mention the upcoming Plague, in order that Moshe should understand that he was to tell Pharaoh off for his delinquency, and to ask from him that he acquiesce to the word of Hashem willingly, *not* because of the plague. In this way, Pharaoh might retain his repentance. This is what Moshe did. He began by asking Pharaoh, “עד מתי מאנת לענת מפני” – “Until when will you withhold from lowering yourself before Me?” Meaning, how long will you refrain from a *תשובה שלימה*, repenting because Hashem said so and you *want* to listen, not only because you are getting slammed by the Plagues.

We may be inspired to repent by the words of a Mussar Sefer, a motivational speaker or a personal tragedy or misfortune. These are all great sparkplugs for initiating contemplation and a soul search, however when it comes *למעשה*, to the act of *Teshuva*, repentance, it should come from a place of self-recognition of what we have done wrong and a desire to fix it for the sake of Hashem. If we can do this with a pure heart, we have a better chance of maintaining our resolutions.