

BEING A NICE GUY

Background

It seems from this Rashi that Moshe made a conscious attempt to align his heart with his brothers. The language of the Medrash is: “He placed his heart and eyes to feel their pain.” This seems to imply that had he not made this conscious attempt to feel their pain, he wouldn’t have felt it.

ספר שמות פרק ב

יא וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם
וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אָחָיו
וַיֵּרָא בְּסַבְּלוֹתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ
מִצָּרֵי מַכָּה אִישׁ עֵבְרִי
מֵאָחָיו

And it was in those days that Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers, and he saw them in their labor.

רש"י על שמות פרק ב פסוק יא

וירא בסבלותם - (ב"ר)
נתן עיניו ולבו להיות
מיצר עליהם

He placed his eyes and heart to feel their pain.

Questions

The Rosh Yeshiva asked the following question: We know that Moshe Rabbeinu was an extremely kind and sensitive person. We also know that the Jewish people were being tortured horrifically during this time. Wouldn’t the natural reaction of a person like Moshe Rabbeinu when seeing this level of brutality have been to feel pity? Wouldn’t this have been a reaction that we would expect to come to him without focus? Yet Rashi seems to be telling us that Moshe had to specifically and consciously allow himself to feel their pain. The question is why? Why did he have to “place his heart and eyes to feel their pain?”