

Why is the ear different

מה נשתנה אזן –

Overview

explains why the ear was bored (and not another limb). explains why we use a bore (or drill) altogether.¹ ר' יוחנן

יש במדרש דמרצ"ע בגימטריא ד' מאות (שנה) -

It is found in a מדרש that the word 'מרצ"ע', in גימטריא is the numerical equivalent of four hundred (years) -

ולפי שהיו ישראל עבדים ארבע מאות שנה² וגאלם הקדוש ברוך הוא -

And since the Jews were slaves for four hundred years, and הקב"ה redeemed them -

והלך זה וקנה אדון לעצמו לפיכך ירצע במרצע העולה³ כך:

And this עבד went and acquires a master over himself, therefore his ear should be bored with a מרצע which is the numerical equivalent of four hundred.

Summary

We bore (only) an עבד with a מרצע for its גימטריא of four hundred is the amount of years the בנ"י were עבדים.

Thinking it over

We learnt previously⁴ that the boring can be done with a סול, סירא וכו' (not only with a מרצע). How does this fit in with תוספות explanation.

¹ According to the דרשה of ר' יוחנן one should be bored with a מרצע for transgressing any of the איסורים שבתורה, for the same reason of אוןן ששמעה וכו'.

² See מהרש"ל that because of the love of הקב"ה to the בנ"י he curtailed the גלות (by counting the four hundred years from when יצחק was born). This magnifies the sin of the עבד.

³ This addresses the question in footnote 3 1.

⁴ כאב.