

## INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

*Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.*

### ויפל על צוארי בנימין אחיו ויבר ובנימין בכה על צואריו

**"He fell upon his brother Binyamin's neck and wept, and Binyamin wept upon Yosef's neck.**  
(45:14)

What is the connection between the *Batei Mikdash* and the *Mishkan*, and the brothers crying on each other's necks? The hearts of all of *Klal Yisrael* should be directed to one place – the *Beit HaMikdash*. As it says in *Shir HaShirim* (4:4), *למגדל דוד צוארך בנוי לתלפיות – Like the tower of David is your neck, built as a landmark.* The neck connects the head to the rest of the body. This connection is symbolic of the connection between the *ruchniyus* (head), and the *gashmiyus* (rest of the body). The function of the *Beit HaMikdash* is to connect the spiritual and the physical, the Heaven to the earth. The *Beit HaMikdash* is a conduit that connects us to *Shamyaim* (*Berachot* 30a). *Tefillah* rises heavenward through the *Beit HaMikdash*, and Hashem bestows *shefa* and *beracha* from above to this world through the *Beit HaMikdash*. (Avnei Nezer)

### ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה

**"And these are the names of the children of Israel coming to Egypt."** (46:8)

*Rashi* explains that, since this verse details events that were taking place right then, the present tense ("are") rather than the past ("were") is used.

But, points out *Rabbi Moshe Feinstein*, the first verse in *Shemot* also uses the present tense, even though events already passed are being discussed. How will *Rashi* explain that?

However, the use of the present tense in *Shemot*, is aimed at teaching us a lesson about the conduct of the Jewish people in Egypt. Instead of learning from the ways of the Egyptians, they held fast to their own standards and values. In effect. They were in a perpetual state of "coming," of having just arrived, with their identity still intact. (*Torah Anthology*)

### ואת יהודה שלח לפניו אל יוסף להורת לפניו גשנה

**"He sent Yehudah ahead of him to Joseph, to prepare ahead of him in Goshen."** (46:28)

The Hebrew spellings of the words *גשנה* (*to Goshen*) and *משיח* (*Mashiach*) have the same numerical value – 358. And it is not incidental that the residence of the Jewish people in Egypt was called *גשן*. *Goshen* stems from the word *הגשה*, which means *to draw close*, as we see in the verses, *ויגש אליו יהודה*, *Then Judah approached* (44:18), and *ויאמר יוסף אל אחיו גשו נא אלי ויגשו ויאמר אני*

יֹסֵף אָחֵיכֶם – *Then Yosef said to his brothers, “Come close to me, if you please,” and they came close. And he said, “I am Yosef, your brother”* (45:4).

*Yosef* reveals his identity only after they have drawn close to him. Only then could the extent of their mutual affection and brotherhood become manifest.

Similarly, when all the Jewish people see themselves as brothers, approaching one another amicably – not cautiously or warily, from a distance – then will we also bring closer the *geulah*, the period of redemption. (Something to Say)

**וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל פַּרְעֹה לְגֹר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֵנוּ כִּי אֵין מְרֻעָה לְצֹאֵן אֲשֶׁר לַעֲבָדֶיךָ כִּי כִבֵּד הָרַעֵב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן**  
“And they said to Pharaoh: ‘We have come to sojourn in the land; for there is no grazing for your servants’ flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan.’” (47:4)

QUESTION: Why did they not tell him that they came to Egypt because they had no food for themselves to eat?

ANSWER: The brothers wanted to convey to *Pharaoh* how intense the famine was in *Canaan*. They told him: “Grass is usually reserved for the flock. People consume fruits and vegetables. The situation is so critical in *Canaan* that people are eating grass, and thus there is no grazing left for the flock.” (Rabbeinu Bechaye)

#### **יֹשֵׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם**

**“Israel settled in the land of Egypt.”** (47:27)

Once the famine ended, and the Egyptians began sowing their fields once more, *Yaakov* and his sons ought to have returned to *Canaan*, for they had said, “*We have come to sojourn – temporarily – in the land...for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan*” (47:4).

But after G-d told *Yaakov*, “*I shall establish you as a great nation there*” (46:3), he understood that it was G-d’s will that he should remain in Egypt until redemption came. Therefore, “*Israel settled – permanently – in the land of Egypt.*” But he was careful to settle alone, “*in the land of Goshen.*” There “*they acquired property*” – as citizens – and “*were fruitful and multiplied greatly*” – as G-d had promised *Yaakov*. (Oznaim L’Torah)

**Rab Y.M. Stern shlit”a (Peninei Kedem) would say:** “Why did *Yosef* want everyone to leave the room when he was speaking with his brothers? *Rashi* explains that *Yosef* couldn’t stand the thought of having the Egyptians overhear that his brothers had sold him into slavery, thus embarrassing them. Personal problems should not be aired in public before the eyes of the whole world. For this reason, *Yosef* asked that the Egyptians leave. In those days, it was understood for people to behave in this manner. But today, to our great distress, it is not so clear.” (Torah Tavlin)

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