

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.

**INSIGHTS from the SEDRA for the year 5783 is being dedicated by
Ruvane & Stephanie Vilinsky in memory of Tzvi Ben Yakov & Shimon Ben Pinchus z"l**

וְהָיָה כִּי אֵין הַנֶּעַר וּמֵת

“And it will happen when Yaakov sees that Binyamin is not with us, that he will die...” (44:31)

Binyamin had ten children. Why didn't *Yehudah* mention the grief that *Binyamin's* children would have in his absence? *Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk* shows this as an example how parents have more compassion for their children than children do for their parents. “One father could support ten children, but ten children cannot support one father.”

The *Ostrovster Rebbe* explains why: Our traits are inherited from the earliest generations. (Hence the *midrashic* expression “*rachmanim bnei rachmanim* – merciful children of merciful parents.) Since *Adam* had children but no human father or mother, he developed compassion for his children but not for any parent. Therefore, to this day, we love our offspring more than our parents. (Pardes Yosef)

בַּהֲתוֹדַע יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחָיו

“When Yosef made himself known to his brothers...” (45:1)

Rabbeinu Ephraim writes that the letters of the word בהתודע, when he made himself known, can be rearranged to read העבדות, the slavery. This explains why *Yosef* ordered all bystanders to leave. He did not want the Egyptians to hear his brothers' shame of having sold him into slavery. (Nachal Kedumim)

וַיִּטֵּב בְּעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה

“And it was pleasing in the eyes of Pharaoh...” (45:16)

Why did *Pharaoh* and his servants welcome the news of the arrival of *Yosef's* brothers? The *Ramban* answered that the social elite of Egypt could not tolerate that a former prisoner had been elevated as second in command to *Pharaoh*. Now they learned that *Yosef* was in fact a scion of nobility. Apparently, *Avraham's* renown as the prince of G-d had spread over the whole Middle East. *Pharaoh* was happy to discover that his vizier was a grandson of *Avraham*.

There was another reason *Pharaoh* showed interest in *Yosef's* family. *Pharaoh* understood *Yosef's* genius as organizer, executive, and planner, and as a visionary blessed with a creative imagination: a rare combination. *Pharaoh* was convinced that the family into which such a great man was born must have more talented people. He wanted the brothers to join Egyptian society and contribute toward its growth and development. (Rabbi Soloveitchik)

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)

והיה בתבואת ונתתם חמישית לפרעה

“And when it shall be harvest time, you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh.” (47:24)

The *Nachal Eliyahu* finds allusion here to the Jewish nation’s term of enslavement in Egypt. The Torah (*Shemos* 12:40) tells us that the duration of the Egyptian exile was four hundred and thirty years. This count began at the time of the Covenant of the Pieces between G-d and *Avraham*; their actual sojourn in Egypt, however, lasted for no longer than two hundred and ten years, out of which only eighty-six were spent in real bondage. Eighty-six, we know, is exactly one fifth of four hundred and thirty. Therefore, when the Torah wrote that “you shall give a fifth to *Pharaoh*,” it was intimating that only one fifth of the total term of exile would be spent in actual bondage.

(Torah Anthology)

SHABBAT SHALOM!

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