



Table Talk Parshat Shemot: *Special Leadership Series*

שמות א':ח'

וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ עַל-מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדָע אֶת-יֹסֵף:

Exodus 1:8

A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph.

רש"י על שמות א':ח'-ב'

אשר לא ידע. עשה עצמו כאלו לא ידעו (סוטה י"א):

Rashi on Exodus 1:8: 2

WHO KNEW NOT [JOSEPH] — he comported himself as though he did not know him (Sotah 11a).

שמות ב':י"א-י"ד

וַיְהִי ׀ בְּיָמִים הֵהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אֶחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ מִצְרִי מַכֶּה אִישׁ-עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו: וַיִּפֹּן כֹּה וְכֹה וַיֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּדּוּ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַּחֹל:

Exodus 2:11-14

Some time after that, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brothers. He turned this way and that and, seeing no one about, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

רש"י על שמות ב':י"א-ב'

וירא בסבלתם. נתן עיניו ולבו להיות מצר עליהם (שמות רבה א')

Rashi on Exodus 2:11:2

AND HE SAW THEIR BURDENS — he set his eyes and mind to share in their distress. (Exodus Rabbah 1:27)

"Precisely when he witnesses human suffering, a new fraternal consciousness arises within him (Moshe). Once he allows himself to see, he arrives obliquely at a knowledge of brotherhood... In a fit of empathy with the victim, he kills the Egyptian tormentor - almost as though in self-defense."

- Avivah Zornberg

Let's Talk!

What does it take to seek to learn about the suffering of others?

What does it take to "forget" someone?

Intervening to protect the Jewish slave is first action of Moshe in the Torah, what does it teach us about him?

How did the pain of another become Moshe's own pain?

How can you see what other people are experiencing?

How is empathy the first step to action?

Focus on leadership:

Why is empathy an important trait for a leader?

How does Moshe's empathy help him as a leader?

How does Pharaoh's lack of empathy hurt him as a leader?



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