

## לדרוש בשבת

### Parashat Shemot 5781

January 8 - 9, 2021

**"The experience of Yaakov in the House of Lavan and the experience of Israel in the Land of Egypt are essentially the same experience."**

- Rabbi David Silber, *Comparing Verses*

**Sources: Bereishit 46: 8-27; Shemot 1:1-7**

The opening seven verses of Parashat Shemot are strikingly similar to a number of verses near the end of Sefer Bereishit. Why? What is the significance of this similarity?

**Source: Rashi on Shemot**

Rashi's response is that God frequently counts the Jewish people to show His love.

But what is the deeper understanding that we achieve when we read both narratives in conversation with each other?

For context, let's take a look at Sefer Bereishit.

**Source: Bereishit 15**

In Bereishit chapter 15, God makes a covenant with Avraham.

The covenant has 2 parts:

- 1) Avraham will have descendants
- 2) His descendants will possess the land of Canaan

Avraham's response to the covenant is *במה אדע כי אירשנה*, which may be translated as "how will I know that I am to possess it?" but *במה* can also be understood as "*with* what will I come to possess it?"

In other words, what's the price of this promise? As an agreement is necessarily two-ways, the better the deal, the higher the cost. Avraham is asking God what entering the covenant will cost him. God's response is *ידוע תדע* – you will surely know what the price is: **גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם ועבדום ועינוי אותם** - *Your descendants will be **strangers** in a land that is not theirs, and will be **enslaved** and **oppressed**.*

**The price of entering God's covenant is עבדות, גרות, and עינוי.**  
**These are the 3 covenantal words of Bereishit.**

**Source: Bereishit 31-32**

Bearing this in mind, open your Tanakh to the story of Yaakov in Lavan's home. Where - and how - do these covenantal terms appear in the narrative?

**Source: Bereishit 28, 46**

Yaakov experiences two exiles in his life - one exile to the house of Lavan and one exile to Egypt. These two chapters are parallel. What are the parallels?

In Chapter 46, Yaakov agrees to the terms of the covenant. By saying *הנני*, he accepts the responsibility of maintaining his side of the deal - namely, that him and his descendants will undergo **exile, slavery** and **suffering** before possessing the land. In this moment, his personal history of suffering and that of his children's future suffering in Egypt are bound together as one process of covenantal fulfillment. Each generation must undergo *עבדות, גרות, and עינוי* in order to be able to enter the Land of Israel. The parallel verses about Yaakov and his family's descent to Egypt bridge the covenant of Bereishit with the fulfillment of the covenant in Shemot.

**שבת שלום!**