



### 1. רש"י בראשית פרק לח פסוק א

ויהי בעת ההוא - למה נסמכה פרשה זו לכאן, והפסיק בפרשתו של יוסף, ללמד שהורידוהו אחיו מגדולתו כשראו בצרת אביהם, אמרו אתה אמרת למכרו, אלו אמרת להשיבו היינו שומעים לך:

### 2. רמב"ן בראשית פרק לח פסוק ח

אבל הענין סוד גדול מסודות התורה בתולדת האדם, ונכר הוא לעיני רואים אשר נתן להם השם עינים לראות ואזנים לשמוע. והיו החכמים הקדמונים קודם התורה יודעים כי יש תועלת גדולה ביבום האח, והוא הראוי להיות קודם בו ואחריו הקרוב במשפחה, כי כל שארו הקרוב אליו ממשפחתו אשר הוא יורש נחלה יגיע ממנו תועלת:

והיו נוהגים לישא אשת המת האח או האב או הקרוב מן המשפחה. ולא ידענו אם היה המנהג קדמון לפני יהודה. ובבראשית רבה (פה ה) אמרו כי יהודה התחיל במצות יבום תחלה, כי כאשר קבל הסוד מאבותיו נזדרז להקים אותו. וכאשר באתה התורה ואסרה אשת קצת הקרובים, רצה הקדוש ברוך הוא להתיר איסור אשת האח מפני היבום, ולא רצה שידחה מפניו איסור אשת אחי האב והבן וזולתם, כי באח הורגל הדבר ותועלת קרובה ולא בהם, כמו שהזכרתי:

והנה נחשב לאכזריות גדולה באח כאשר לא יחפוץ ליבם, וקוראים אותו בית חלוץ הנעל (דברים כה י) כי עתה חלץ מהם, וראוי הוא שתעשה המצוה זאת בחליצת הנעל. וחכמי ישראל הקדמונים מדעתם הענין הנכבד הזה, הנהיגו לפנים בישראל לעשות המעשה הזה בכל יורשי הנחלה, באותם שלא יהיה בהם איסור השאר, וקראו אותו גאולה, וזהו ענין בועז וטעם נעמי והשכנות. והמשכיל יבין:

### 3. בראשית פרק מב פסוק לו

וַיֹּאמֶר רְאוּבֵן אֶל-אֲבִיו לֵאמֹר אֶת-שְׁנֵי בְנֵי תְמַיִת אִם-לֹא אֶבְיְאֵנוּ אֶלְיָךְ תִּגַּה אֹתוֹ עַל-יָדִי וְאֲנִי אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ אֵלֶיךָ:

#### 4. R. Bazak

Where on earth did Reuven get such an idea from? It seems reasonable to suggest that he sought to hint that someone who fails to take responsibility for a brother is deserving of having his own two sons die – as happened to Yehuda. (It must be remembered that by this time, Reuven already had four sons [see 46:9], and hence the fact that he says specifically "two sons" is not coincidental.)

### 5. תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוטה דף י עמוד ב

הכר נא - א"ר חמא ברבי חנינא: בהכר בישר לאביו, בהכר בישרו; בהכר בישר - הכר נא הכתנת בנך היא, בהכר בישרוהו - הכר נא למי

6. R. David Forhman – after this act, Yehuda gets back his royal clothes – staff, cloak, and signet ring.

7. R. Yoni Grossman – note in sale of Yosef story that the brother's see Yosef as the "dreamer", while Yehuda stresses that they should sell him because he is their brother!

#### 8. R. Elchanan Samet

- i (1-5) Birth of Yehuda's three sons
- ii (6-11) deaths of Er and Onan without children, Tamar sent away
- iii (12-14) preparations for Tamar's encounter with Yehuda
- iv (16-18) the fateful encounter
- iii (19-23) Tamar's return to previous situation
- ii (24-26) Tamar's "trial," cancellation of her death sentence
- i (27-30) birth of the twins

### 9. רשב"ם בראשית פרק לו פסוק ב

כי כל אלה תולדות האמור בתורה [ובנביאים] ובכתובים יש מהם שמפרשים בני האדם ויש מהם רבים שמפרשים בני בנים, כאשר פירשת באלה תולדות נח. למעלה בפרשת בראשית כת' ויהי נח בן חמש מאות שנה ויולד נח את שם ואת חם ואת יפת, ואחרי כן מפרש כי העולם חטאו ונח מצא חן, ואחרי כן מפרש אלה תולדות נח בני בניו, היאך? כי שלשה בניו היו לו וציוה הק' להכניסם בתיבה י"ב חודש, ובצאתם ויולדו להם בניו אחרי המבול עד שעולים לשבעים בניו שהיו שבעים אומות, כדכת' מאלה נפרדו וגו'. וכן בעשו... ועתה כתב אלה תולדות יעקב, בני בניו שהיו שבעים והיאך נולדו. כיצד? יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה ונתקנאו בו אחיו ומתוך כך ירד יהודה מאת אחיו והיו לו בניו בכזיב ובעדולם שלה ופרץ וזרח, ונתגלגל הדבר שיוסף הורד מצרימה ונולדו לו במצרים מנשה ואפרים ושלח יוסף בשביל אביו וביתו עד שהיו שבעים. וכל זה היה צריך משה רבנו לכתוב שעל זה הוכיחם בשבעים נפש ירדו אבותיך וגו'!

#### 10. R. Elchanan Samet

Section 1: The rift in Yaakov's family; the family is together in Canaan.

Section 2: The trials and tribulations of Yosef in Egypt until he becomes the King's viceroy.

Section 3: The trials and tribulations of the brothers in their descents to Egypt until Yosef reveals his identity to them.

Section 4: Reconciliation in Yaakov's family; the family is together again, this time in Egypt.

In the description of Yosef's servitude in Egypt and his descent into the dungeon there, our attention is drawn mainly to his bitter personal fate. But this is not the main point of a story whose subject is the struggle for the establishment of seed in

Yaakov's family. The main point is something that the modern reader does not pay much attention to at all: AS A SERVANT IN EGYPT, YOSEF IS PREVENTED FROM ESTABLISHING A FAMILY! From this point of view, Yaakov's mourning for Yosef is justified – even though Yosef is alive. In the ancient world, even if a slave bore offspring through a maidservant given to him by his master, such offspring were not considered his own children, but rather the property of the master (compare [Shemot 21:4](#)).

At the center of the story of Yosef as a slave in Egypt (chapter 39) is the failure of Potifar's wife to seduce him. The temptation offered by a woman to a man also stands as the central axis of the previous story, in chapter 38 (except there it is successful). What is the difference between these two acts of temptation? Tamar tempts Yehuda to turn to her in order to establish seed for his family, and therefore her actions are justified; Yehuda himself has no criticism because of the positive results of her actions. The temptation of Potifar's wife, in contrast, is a tragic illustration of Yosef's situation as someone who is unable to establish his seed. For it is not for the purposes of establishing seed that Potifar's wife approaches him, but rather as a means of sexual entertainment. It is Yosef's status as a slave that underlies this story, which is the very opposite of founding a family and bearing children. It is to Yosef's great credit that he withstood the temptation, believing that the day would come when he would be able to establish his seed in a proper way.

With Yosef's incarceration for an unlimited period of time, it appears that any hope of seed being established from this branch of Yaakov's family is now lost. But hidden Divine Providence brings about events in such a way that Yosef is removed from the dungeon and becomes viceroy to the King of Egypt. The climax of his ascent to greatness begins in a verse that seems quite unrelated:

(41:45) "And he gave him Osnat, daughter of Poti Fera, priest of On, as a wife."

Yosef finally marries a wife legally, thus laying the foundation for the establishment of a family. The tangible climax of the story is located near its conclusion:

(41:50-52) "And two sons were born to Yosef before the years of famine (that were borne to him by Osnat, daughter of Poti Fera, priest of On). And Yosef named the firstborn Menashe... and the second one he called Efraim, FOR GOD HAS MADE ME FRUITFUL IN THE LAND OF MY AFFLICTION."

This conclusion of the story of Yosef parallels – both chronologically and thematically – the conclusion of the story of Yehuda and Tamar. At the end of these twenty years during which Yehuda and Yosef "descended" from their family and during which the continuity of each of them faced a real threat, they both eventually establish their seed, with TWO SONS born to each – an expression of fertility. Peretz and Zerach, and Menashe and Efraim, are of more or less the same ages, and it is they who bear the message of victory in the battle to establish "generations" for the household of Yaakov.

#### F. THE DESCENTS TO EGYPT AS A CONTINUATION OF THE "GENERATIONS OF YAAKOV"

The famine that devastates the land just a short time after the birth of these four sons places the ENTIRE family of Yaakov in terrible mortal danger, as a result of which the family commences a process of reunification. It appears that it is this danger that causes Yehuda and his offspring to rejoin the family.

The encounter with the cruel Egyptian ruler – i.e., with Yosef, who hides his identity from his brothers – brings upon the family a further danger (though only imaginary) of further branches of Yaakov's family being cut off.

Reuven, who suggests later on (37), "Put my TWO SONS to death if I fail to bring him (Binyamin) to you," reveals his complete misunderstanding of the essence of the whole battle. The previous battles were fought for the birth of "two sons," and now, again, the fight is for the survival of the family as a whole – for the "generations of Yaakov."

But when the famine becomes severe, it is Yehuda who prevails:

(43:8) "Send the boy (Binyamin) with me and we shall get up and go; THAT WE MAY LIVE AND NOT DIE – BOTH WE AND YOU AND OUR CHILDREN."

In the plot of the viceroy's goblet, the (imaginary) threat of annihilation reaches its climax, but it is followed by Yosef's revelation of his identity before the brothers. The lost branch of the family (i.e. Yosef) can finally be reunited, TOGETHER WITH THE SONS born to him in Egypt.

The list of the seventy souls that descend to Egypt, led by Yaakov, is composed primarily of Yaakov's GRANDCHILDREN, and it is a song of victory in the battle for the family's survival and for the establishment of offspring. While dwelling in Canaan, Yaakov has established the real foundation for the nation that will come into being upon Egyptian soil.

Thus, the subject of our story, as we have defined it here, connects to its subject as we defined it above: as the story of the beginning of the exile. We are now aware of the great importance attached to the fact that Yaakov established "generations" – many grandchildren – in Canaan, and that he descended to Egypt not just "with his staff," but at the head of a tribe numbering seventy souls. The foundation for the development of Am Yisrael in Egypt was created in their promised land, and it will be towards this homeland of theirs that they will yearn to return.

11. Connect to other two "Yibum stories" – Rut, and the daughters of Lot. Rut's story is the culmination of both.