

BUSINESS ETHICS

Background

The *Siforno* is bothered by the seeming repetition used in the *posuk*: **Yosef was the ruler; he was the provider**. The *Siforno* answers that this actually teaches us a significant concept: not only was Yosef the ruler of Mitzrayim, he was literally the provider because no grain was sold without his signature. Since there was so much money involved in the selling of the grain and all of it was fit to go to Pharaoh, no single sale of grain took place during the seven years of famine that Yosef didn't personally sign off on.

Questions

Isn't this an inefficient method of doing business? Granted, it may have saved Pharaoh some money, but what about the sheer amount of time it took for Yosef to be standing there signing every document? Didn't Yosef have better things to do with his time? He certainly had much Torah to learn and his own family to teach. Additionally, Pharaoh had more than enough money, so Yosef should have been entitled to say, "I will work hard, but why should I kill myself so that this Egyptian king should have extra wealth?"

ספר בראשית פרק מב

(ו) וְיוֹסֵף הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט עַל הָאָרֶץ הוּא הַמְּשַׁבֵּיר לְכָל עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיָּבֵאוּ אֹחֵי יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ אַפַּיִם אֶרְצָה

And Yosef was the ruler over the land. He was the provider to all the people of the land, and the brothers of Yosef came and bowed down full face to the ground.

ספורנו עה"ת ספר בראשית פרק מב פסוק ו

(ו) הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט עַל הָאָרֶץ הוּא הַמְּשַׁבֵּיר. עִם הַיּוֹסֵף הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט הִיָּה הוּא בַעֲצֻמוֹ הַמוֹכֵר וְלֹא הִיָּה מֵאֲמִין בַּעֲבָדוֹ כִּי אֲמַנֵּם הִיָּה הַכֶּסֶף רַב מְאֹד וְרֵאוּי לַפְרָעָה כְּאֲמֹרוֹ וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת הַכֶּסֶף בֵּיתָה פְרָעָה וְלִכְנֹן לֹא הִיָּה שׁוֹם בַּר נִמְכָּר לְקוֹנִים בְּלִתֵּי חוֹתְמוֹ אוֹ כְּתָב יָדוֹ

He was the ruler over the land. He was the provider. – *When Yosef was the ruler, he was also the one who actually sold the grain, as he didn't trust his servants. The money [exchanged] was so great that it was fitting to go to Pharaoh. Therefore, no grain was sold without Yosef's signature or handwriting.*