

RESPONSIBILITY

Background

Yosef was singled out by Pharaoh to be ruler over all of Mitzrayim. He was given the ability to write laws and to create policy *carte blanche*. No action was done without his approval; he had almost total power.

The *Siforno* points out that since Yosef personally signed every document involved with the purchase of wheat, he found out when his brothers had entered the land. The *Siforno* is troubled why a man of Yosef's status and position would be involved in so menial a task. He explains that Yosef signed each document because "*the money was vast, and he didn't trust his servants.*"

Questions

Yosef was a brilliant manager. Surely, he could have set up a system of checks that would have been effective against theft. And even if a small amount of money was stolen, that is considered a normal business loss. Didn't Yosef have better things to do with his time than sit there all day signing documents?

ספר בראשית פרק מב

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

And Yosef was the ruler over the land and provider to all the people; and the brothers of Yosef came and bowed down in front of him.

ספורנו עה"ת ספר בראשית פרק מב פסוק ו

(ו) הוּא הַשְּׁלִיט עַל הָאָרֶץ הוּא הַמְּשַׁבֵּיר. עַם הַיִּתּוֹ הַשְּׁלִיט הִיּהוּ הוּא בַעֲצָמוֹ הַמוֹכֵר וְלֹא הִיּהוּ מֵאֲמִין בַּעֲבָדָיו כִּי אֲמַנָּם הִיּהוּ הַכֹּסֵף רַב מֵאֵד וְרֵאוּי לַפְרָעָה כֹּאמְרוּ וַיָּבֵאוּ יוֹסֵף אֶת הַכֹּסֵף בֵּיתָה פְרָעָה וְלִכְנֹן לֹא הִיּהוּ שׁוֹם בַּר נִמְכַר לְקוֹנִים בְּלֹתֵי חוֹתְמוֹ אוֹ כְּתֵב יָדוֹ:

While he was the ruler, he himself was the merchant. He didn't trust his servants because the money was vast and fitting for Pharaoh. Therefore, no grain was sold without Yosef's signature.