**JANUARY 6, 2024** 

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of loving memory of Yosef ben Salim. "May his Neshama have an Aliya!"

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25 TEVES

Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

**PARSHAS SHEMOS** 

## **Root Cause of Antisemitism**

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were disgusted because of the people of Israel (1:12).

On the face of it, this verse seems a little hard to understand. What exactly were the Egyptians disgusted with and for what reason? Rashi (ad loc) explains that "they were disgusted with their own lives." Though Rashi explains what they were disgusted with (their own lives) he doesn't provide the reason for their disgust and their harsh reaction.

In fact, this has been an existential question that has haunted the Jewish people for two millennia: Why do so many people hate us? What did we ever do to them to incite the need to exterminate or expel us from their lands?

The answer is actually given in the verse itself. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were on a mission to eradicate the nation through excessive taxation and hard labor. Yet "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." In other words, the more they did to us the more successful we became, particularly in growing as a nation. Our incredible success under the harshest conditions highlighted their own inadequacies as a nation. It began to dawn on them that compared to the Jewish nation they

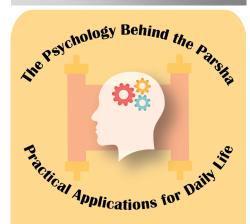
On the face of it, this verse seems a were far inferior. That is why, Rashi little hard to understand. What explains, they were disgusted with exactly were the Egyptians their own lives. Frankly, seeing our disgusted with and for what reason? ascension made them feel terrible Rashi (ad loc) explains that "they about themselves.

Unfortunately, this has been repeated throughout history. The Germans, soundly defeated after World War Ι. were both embarrassed and impoverished. This became a breeding ground for the most virulent antisemitism because they needed to feel that they weren't at fault; rather it was the fault of the Jews who controlled everything and were a malevolent subhuman life form. Therefore, the Jews should be exterminated.

If one travels through Poland and Ukraine it will become readily apparent how miserable the populace is and why antisemitism is "mother's milk" in these countries. The root cause of antisemitism is a host country's deep dissatisfaction with their own lives; particularly as it is contrasted by the success of the Jews. Obviously, their ready solution to feeling better about themselves is to eliminate those that highlight their inadequacies.



#### Miami Edition



### Join Rabbi Akiva Zweig's Weekly Parsha Class

Wednesday Mornings at 9:30am

Meeting ID: 2765819544 Password: raz

### Join HaRav Yochanan Zweig's Baalei Batim Shiur on the Parsha

Friday Mornings at 11:15am

Meeting ID: 78325727308

Password: ryz

# A Deafening Silence

The Talmud (Sotah 11a) tells us The Talmud continues by telling us The reason that Iyov's suffering is three advisers.

Bilaam, the grandson of Lavan (according to some opinions he actually was Lavan), was an evil man and relished the prospect of eradicating the Jewish people. It was he who advised Pharaoh to enslave the people, destroy their identity, and later to kill the male babies.

Iyov was a righteous man who was opposed to any plan to destroy the Jewish nation. Yet, rather than display his true feelings on the issue, he refrained from offering any opinion. Perhaps he knew that his objections would be met with resistance. He most likely rationalized that he could do more to help the plight of the Jewish people at a later date by remaining in his position as advisor. As a result, he decided not to oppose or accept Bilaam's proposal, remained silent.

Yisro, on the other hand, objected to Pharaoh's characterization of the Jews as a "problem" and rejected the idea of exterminating the Jewish people. Yisro's protests angered Pharaoh and Yisro had to followed tragedy? flee Egypt in order to save his life.

that Pharaoh had three advisers: that each of the three advisers was clearly more severe than even Yisro, Iyov, and Bilaam. When rewarded or punished according to Bilaam's punishment is because his Pharaoh was deciding how to his deed. Bilaam, who encouraged reaction was the unwitting cause approach his "Jewish Problem" he the execution of thousands of the Jewish nation's suffering in sought the opinion of each of his innocent Jews, was killed by the Egypt. How? In every generation sought verv people silent in the face of Jewish civilizations possessions and then his children not justify the means. Society house). Yisro, who fled because of shadows. opposition, sacrificing position of leadership and life of comfort and wealth in Egypt, eventually became the father-inlaw of Moshe and his descendants became prominent judicial leaders of Bnei Yisroel.

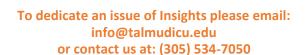
> person measure for Therefore. we can understand the reward However, why was against the Jewish people. Iyov's so severely. only sin was remaining silent. Why then did he have to suffer such a harsh life, one where tragedy

to there are madmen who have no exterminate. Ivov, who remained qualms about the murder of entire oppression, was afflicted with a life warped goals. What keeps them in of tremendous emotional pain check? Mainstream society saying (first he slowly lost all his this is not okay, that the ends do died) and physical suffering (his saving that they will not tolerate body became covered in boils to such behavior is what causes these the point he wouldn't leave his sociopaths to retreat to the

Much like the way Hitler (yemach shemo) came to absolute power when his many years of vitriolic propaganda was embraced by the German society. Pharaoh realized that if Iyov wouldn't even stand against the destruction of the Jews We know that a very basic tenet of than it was an acceptable plan. The Judaism is that God repays a real responsibility for the creation measure. of evil isn't by the madmen who clearly conceive it; the responsibility lies and with the society that accepts it as a punishment of Yisro and Bilaam. viable approach. Iyov's silence was lyov's the precursor to every society that punishment so severe? Ivov did not is silent in the face of unspeakable support the decree of persecution evil. That was why he was punished



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