

Shivim Panim – Melton Scholars Curriculum  
Sefer Shmot  
Unit 5 – Off to a Tough Start  
Melton Gesher at the JCC, May 2, 2012

- A) The background
  - 1) Chapter 3, verses 16 – 20
  - 2) Chapter 4, verses 27 - 31
- B) The text for today
  - 1) Verse 1
    - a) What is problematic, what is missing, in the very beginning of the verse?
  - 2) Verse 2
    - a) Compare to chapter 1 of Sefer Shmot: How might we have expected Pharaoh's reaction to be very different? How might we explain his radical change of heart?
  - 3) Verse 3
    - a) What is the intent of the words 'lest he strike us with pestilence or sword'?
  - 4) Verse 5
    - a) See the beginning of the verse in Hebrew – ויאמר פרעה: what is very strange here? (Note: The English translation tries to cover it up)
    - b) What might this strange usage indicate?
    - c) Why does Pharaoh say 'the people of the land are already so numerous'? What does he mean to communicate?
    - d) Do you think that Moshe and Aaron should have been surprised by the obstinacy of Pharaoh or should they have expected it?
  - 5) Verses 20 – 23
    - a) How do you think that Moshe and Aaron may have felt upon hearing the reactions of the foremen?
    - b) What may Moshe be feeling as he speaks to God here?
    - c) Do you think that these verses show Moshe in a positive light or in a negative light?
- C) The commentaries
  - 1) Commentary number 1 – Rav Avraham ben haRambam
  - 2) Commentary number 2 – Midrash Raba
  - 3) Commentary number 5 – Midrash Raba
  - 4) Commentary number 8 – Professor Shulamit Elizur
  - 5) Commentary number 4 – Josephus, lines 37 ff.
  - 6) Commentary number 9 - Babylonian Talmud
    - a) Compare Bmidbar chapter 20, verses 7 – 13
  - 7) Commentary number 10 – Midrash Raba