

A Closer Look-Shemos

Text:

Moses, raised in Pharaoh's palace, remains concerned for his enslaved brethren.

“[Moses] went out to [visit] his brothers, and saw their burdens.”

[Exodus 2:11]

“He focused his eyes and his heart to feel pain for them.”

[Rashi Ibid.]

Question:

Until today, we remember the terrible suffering of the Jews in Egypt: the backbreaking labor, the murder of Jewish babies, the degradation of our People to the point of near destruction. Moses was one of the most sensitive, understanding and empathetic individuals in history. Why did it take effort for him to share his brothers' pain?

Answer:

Any decent individual would have been moved and shaken by the horrors before him - but Moses was not satisfied with this instinctive reaction. The human heart has unlimited capacity, and Moses invested effort to attain an even deeper degree of empathy.

Message:

God expects us to maximize our capacity for feeling. No matter how sensitive we are, we can, through conscious effort, reach ever-greater levels of emotional response.