

After the dramatic meeting between יוסף and his brothers, when he finally reveals himself, יוסף gives specific instructions regarding how to bring יעקב down to מצרים. The very last words יוסף tells them are in the פסוק (45:24): וְיִשְׁלַח אֶת אֶחָיו וַיָּלֶכְוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֵל תִּרְגְּזוּ בַדֶּרֶךְ. There are many מפרשים who discuss the meaning of the unique phrase אֵל תִּרְגְּזוּ בַדֶּרֶךְ. רש"י provides two פשטים, the first פשוט is: אֵל תִּתְעַסְקוּ בַדֶּבֶר הַלָּכָה. Simply put, יוסף tells them, "Don't engage in an intense halachic discussion on your way back to ארץ ישראל because you might lose focus and get lost on the road."

There are two parallel, beautiful דברי תורה, one from the Brisker Rav and one from the אפריון (which is from רב שלמה גאנצפריד, the famous author of the קיצור שולחן ערוך) which complement each other. We will do the אפריון first, and some of it is repeated in the Brisker Rav's exposition, but I think they work together very, very beautifully.

The אפריון raises a question: If יוסף warns his brothers not to engage in הלכה during their travels, why didn't יעקב give them the same warning earlier? He answers by pointing out a deeper layer of this story.

כיבוד אב had realized that their father's 22-year absence in חרן without fulfilling the מצוה of מצוה was connected to יעקב's suffering of losing יוסף for 22 years. (While יעקב had left home under his parents' directive, the דין was still מדוקדק for צדיקים, measuring them כחוט השערה.) Although the עונש was decreed משמים, the brothers understood that they were the גורמים of יעקב's pain and bore responsibility for his suffering. Therefore, they themselves will have to give a דין on it, as is brought down clearly in פרקי אבות. "You were killed because you were a killer, and those who killed you, will meet the same fate." The אפריון cites (2:6): וְעַל דָּאֲטַפְתָּ, אֲטַפּוּדָּהּ. וְסוֹף מְטִיפֶנָּה יְטוּפוֹן, the famous saying of הלל, when he saw a skull in the water. "You were killed because you were a killer, and those who killed you, will meet the same fate." The אפריון cites גאון (possibly the מהרי"ץ חיות) who explains that the brothers, as the גורמים of יעקב's pain, would need to undergo מידה כנגד מידה despite being שליחים of Hashem, because we say על ידי חייב.

When יוסף revealed himself, the brothers realized that יעקב's loss of יוסף paralleled his 22 years away from יוסף. Yet they noted a critical distinction: יעקב's 14 years spent learning תורה were not included in the דין, teaching them that תלמוד תורה is greater than כיבוד אב. This realization inspired the brothers to seek כפרה for their role in יעקב's suffering by intensifying their תורה learning. They decided to learn תורה even on the road back to ארץ ישראל. However, יוסף cautioned them with the words אֵל תִּרְגְּזוּ בַדֶּרֶךְ, advising them that the dangers of the road outweighed the benefits of their heightened learning at that moment. That's the vort, which is a really fascinating vort, from the אפריון; it's a wonderful ספר, a very small little ספר, but tremendously deep.

Now we'll go to the Brisker Rav, some of the things which I just told you will be repeated, but they're worth hearing again. The Brisker Rav brings מסכת תענית דף י ע"ב from רש"י which says: אֵל תִּתְעַסְקוּ בַדֶּבֶר - that the road should not be a danger to you, that you should not get lost. The Brisker Rav continues: אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֵעָזַי בְּרַבְרִי: שְׁנֵי תַלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים שֶׁהֵלְכִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְאִין בִּינִינְהוּ דְּבִרֵי תוֹרָה רְאוּיִין לִישְׁרָף - if two תלמידי חכמים who are walking on their own and they don't learn in תורה, they don't talk in תורה, they have to be destroyed. So the question is, that's in direct contradiction to what יוסף was just telling them?

The Brisker Rav resolves the apparent contradiction: יוסף's warning specifically addressed לימוד בעיין, an intense and absorbing level of learning. While regular תורה study is essential even during travel, engaging in לימוד בעיין could cause them to lose focus and endanger themselves.

The Brisker Rav brings an additional vort, which I thought was very worthwhile, and important to transmit to you as well. When יוסף revealed himself earlier in the פרשה, he says (45:3) אָנֹכִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אֲבִי חַי. The Brisker Rav continues: וְלֹא יָבֹלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אוֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפָּנָיו. The Brisker Rav (5:11) says - פְּרָחָה נִשְׁמָתוֹ - that the brothers were so overwhelmed that actually died, and Hashem performed a נס and gave them תחיית המתים.



Now, this אָנִי יוסף was astounding to them. They were coming to מצרים on the small chance they might possibly find יוסף in this tremendously vast country. And if in fact they do find him, which was unlikely, he would be an עבד עבדים in some who-knows-where. Now they see he is the מושל of מצרים, and not only that, he is the one who has been giving them all of this נְכוּנָה from the moment that they got there, it never entered their minds that this is יוסף. So this was so astonishing, so overwhelming, so incredible, that נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנֵיו.

Then the Brikess Rav says his interesting insight: let's say this happened to us? If we had such an astounding revelation which knocks out all of our preconceived notions in one shot, it would take us a while to assimilate that, it would take us a while to get that under our belts. However, who are we talking about? We're talking about שבטים. As soon as they came to, they said, "We've got to sit down and learn better". They didn't sit and wonder about this amazing turn of events, contemplating on it for hours or days or weeks. "We've got to sit down and learn, and we've got to learn hard, because that's our תפקיד right now. We've got to sit and learn תורה with even greater diligence, in order that we should be able to be מכפר on our עבירות." Therefore, יוסף had to tell them אַל תִּגְזֹזוּ בְּדֶרֶךְ - "Yes, you can do that, but don't do it on the road, because that would be dangerous and not in your best interests."

This profound insight holds an important lesson. When we face difficulties or challenges, our response should align with what Hashem wants from us - engaging in תורה and מצוות with renewed dedication. By doing so, we create זכות for ourselves, our families, and all of כלל ישראל. Good Shabbos!



