

This week's פרשה has the great פגישה, the great confrontation, between יוסף and יוסף. יוסף has threatened to imprison בנימין because he accused him of stealing the גביע. יוסף comes to בנימין's defense, delivering an impassioned speech. Following this, יוסף reveals himself with the famous words (45:3), אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אָבִי. The תורה tells us, וְלֹא יָקְלוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אוֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנָיו. The brothers were astonished and overcome with fear. It was both shocking and terrifying for them to discover that this אדון מצרים who had been challenging them, was יוסף. The בית הליי brings several profound questions on this episode:

1. All of יהודה's טענות centered on sparing יעקב from the immense pain of losing בנימין. יהודה argued that their actions were only for the sake of their father. If so, why does יוסף suddenly ask, הֲאֵנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אֲבִי הִי? Where is the place for this question? It seems unnecessary and irrelevant.
2. When the brothers returned to מצרים the second time, יוסף already asked them (43:27), הַשְׁלֹם אֲבִיכֶם הֲנֵקֶן, הָאִשֶּׁר אָמַרְתֶּם הָעוֹדְנוּ הִי? They had not yet returned to ארץ ישראל but were caught on the way and brought back. Why would יוסף ask again, הָעוֹד אֲבִי הִי?
3. Even if the question was valid, where is the answer? The תורה does not record any response from the brothers.

אי לָנוּ מִיּוֹם said; אַבְא פֿהן בֿרֶדְלָא - אַבְא פֿהן בֿרֶדְלָא אָמַר: (מדרש רבה 93:10) פסוק brought on this מדרש There's a הָדִין - woe to us from the day of דִּין, and the day of judgment, which will be at משיח's time, or after a person's 120 years; יוסף was the יוסף קטנן שֶׁל שְׂבָטִים - אי לָנוּ מִיּוֹם הַתּוֹכַחָה; - from the day of reproach; they couldn't וְלֹא יָקְלוּ אֲחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אוֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנָיו; (בנימין of course, except for שבטים, (of course, answer him because they were so astonished; when - לְכַשְׁיָבוֹא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְיוֹכִיחַ כָּל אֶחָד וְאַחַד לְפִי מַה שֶּׁהוּא; אוכיח: (תהלים נ, כא) מוסר, his תוכחה, his reproof, as the פסוק says comes and gives each one his מוסר, his תוכחה, his reproof, as the פסוק says The מדרש raises another question from this הלוי: Where is the תוכחה in this? It seems like יוסף was simply revealing his identity, not delivering תוכחה. Moreover, what is the distinction between דין and תוכחה?

To understand this, we must see יוסף's question הֲיִנְעוֹד אֲכִי הִי not as a query, but as a rhetorical statement. It was not a פְּיוֹס, an attempt to appease them, but rather a sharp תוכחה. After יוסף revealed himself, he initially refrained from using any לשון of אחוה or אהבה, saying only אֲנִי יוֹסֵף, without referring to them as brothers. Only after the second פסוק, after it says, כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפָּנָיו, does it say (45:4), אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחֵיכֶם, with a לשון of אחוה, showing that he really loves them and considers them his brothers. But in the first פסוק it just mentions אֲנִי יוֹסֵף, without any אחוה or אהבה. יוסף's rhetorical question was, "You just finished telling me how much you care about our father. If you were so concerned about his suffering, why did you not think of that when you sold me?" This was a powerful accusation against them. יוסף essentially told them, "If my father could live after you sold me, losing בנימין can't be anywhere near as bad as that." This סתירה undermined every טענה יהודה had just made.

This is the תוכחה of הדין יום and יום התוכחה. The דין is the judgment for one's actions, while the תוכחה is the exposure of their consequences. I'm going to cut it, I want to wish everybody, a good Shabbos, and Im Yirtzeh Hashem, we should hear גיטא בשורות, and you should all have נחת from the family, we should have נחת from you, and we should all be געזונט and שטארק, and we should continue to meet by שמהות. Good Shabbos!

