



דרכים בפרשה

ויגש



ויאסר יוסף מרכבתו ויעל לקראת־ישראל אביו גשנה וירא אליו ויפל על־צוואריו

ויבך על־צוואריו עוד

Yosef “hitched” his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father Yisroel; he presented himself to him and, embracing him around the neck, he wept on his neck a good while.

Rashi explains: הוא עָצְמוּ - ויאסר יוסף מרכבתו - אָסַר אֶת הַסּוּסִים לְמַרְכָּבָה לְהַזְדַּרְזוֹ לְכָבוֹד אָבִיו - *He himself harnessed the horses to the chariot being eager to show honour to his father.* יוֹסֵף - וירא אליו - *and he appeared before him* — יוֹסֵף הֵרָאָה אֶל אָבִיו לְשׁוֹן הַרְבוֹת בְּכִיָּה וכו';. ויבך על צוואריו עוד - *The phrase signifies excessive crying.* אָבִי לֹא נָפַל עַל צְוֵאֲרֵי יוֹסֵף וְלֹא נִשְׁקוּ, - *However, Yaakov did not fall upon Yosef’s neck nor did he kiss him. Chazal say: the reason was that he was reciting the Shema.*

The question has been asked before: did that happen to be the time to say shema or was there perhaps a different reason at that moment to say it, and if so, why didn't Yosef also say shema?

In order to answer this, there is another question (Ramban) that must be asked: what is Rashi adding by telling us that Yosef came within view of his father? Isn't that obvious?

Rav Leib Chasman zt"l (Or Yahel pt.3) beautifully explains that Rashi was bothered by this exact question: why is the Torah telling us that he came within the view of his father, the Torah already said that Yosef prepared his chariot and went to his father. What else would have happened? At the very

least, Yaakov must have seen him when Yosef fell on his neck?

To this says Rav Leib, Rashi is explaining as follows: let us consider the scenario from both perspectives, Yaakov's and Yosef's. What was going through Yosef's mind at that very moment? “Twenty-two years since the last time that I saw my father... Oh how I have yearned for this moment just to see him again.” Wasn't that his question to his brothers? “How is your father?” And once again, after the great reveal, his very first words, “Is my father still alive?” Without a question, Yosef was desperate to see his father again!

ויאמר ישראל אל־יוסף - *Now I can die, having seen for myself that you are still alive.* Yosef surely empathized with his father's feelings.

Now upon finally reaching the moment of seeing each other, Yosef put both thoughts in front of himself: his own feelings and thoughts of his father's feelings. But which thought was the dominant one? The Torah informs us that Yosef didn't wait for his

servants to arrange his carriage because he was eager to honour his father. From there, he went as quickly as possible to Goshen towards Yisroel, his father, i.e. every action was directed at his father, meaning, for his father's honour. When he finally arrived, of course he wanted to see his father, but the Torah testifies וירא אליו - that he presented himself in front of his father. It was as if Yosef had no part in this meeting, for all his thoughts were bent on his father. Instead of "selfishly" thinking of himself and his own needs, he thought, "what about my father?" "I shall make this moment about him and not about me."

Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman shlita (Shaarei Ora) expands on this thought to explain Yaakov's recital: Chazal state in Masechta Kallah (3:19) העבר רצונך מפני רצון שמים שכן מצינו ליעקב שלא נשק ליוסף - *Subordinate your will to the will of Heaven; for so we find that Yaakov did not kiss Yosef.* אמאי לא נשק ליה סבר דילמא איידי דגלה אטעיניה נשי אגב שופריה דכתיב וירא אליו - ויפול על צוואריו איהו בעי למינשקיה ולא שבקיה - *Why did he not kiss him? He thought that, since he was away from home, women may have led him astray because of his beauty; as it is written, And he presented himself unto him, and fell on his neck. (which does not mention Yaakov kissing his son).*

What an incredible thought! Yaakov so desperately wants to see his son; hold him; hug him and kiss him. However, because Yaakov does not know what his spiritual status is, he will not allow himself to kiss him

until he is certain. In that manner, Yaakov was placing the smallest details of *halacha* and *kedusha* in front of his own feelings. He was sacrificing the love of his own son for the love of Hashem. At that very moment, the actions of Yaakov Avinu were shouting out as loud as possible the words of *shema*: ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל-לבבך ובכל-נפשך ובכל-מאדך - *You shall love Hashem your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* Yaakov was demonstrating that the greatest love that one can have is the love of Hashem, thus figuratively reciting the shema.

In our original question, we asked: why Yosef did not also recite the shema at that moment? The answer is the exact same: Yosef wanted to see his father and fill that desperate void. However, Yosef had a mitzvah in front of him that he would first look after. That was the mitzvah of Kibbud Av. By putting Hashem's mitzvos before his own personal feelings, Yosef was indeed reciting the most beautiful shema possible.

In their own way, both Yaakov and Yosef "said" shema at that meeting. How so? By giving over their feelings of love first to Hashem and only afterwards for themselves thus fulfilling ואהבת את ה'.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפעל



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