

פרשת ויגש

ויאסור יוסף את מרכבתו ויעל לקראת ישראל אביו וירא אליו ויפול על צואריו [מו,כט]

יעקב יוסף writes on the words וירא אליו, that יוסף appeared to his father. It seems as though רש"י is just repeating what it says in the פסוק. What is רש"י telling us that we don't already see from the פסוק? This question can really be asked on the פסוק itself. Why does the פסוק have to say וירא אליו, and he saw him, obviously if יעקב and יוסף met they saw each other?

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz זצ"ל (שיחות מוסר תשל"ג) explains that when יוסף went out to greet his father, there were actually two reasons for him to do so. Of course he had a great longing to see and be with his father who he had not seen for twenty two years. There was a special relationship that יוסף and יעקב had with each other as we know from פרשת וישב. יוסף also understood the pain and anguish his father suffered all these years not knowing יוסף's fate. The special closeness יוסף had with יעקב was mutual, and יוסף knew that his father would have a tremendous simcha to see him. The other reason that יוסף went to see his father was the great mitzvah of כיבוד אב, to give simcha and joy to יעקב אביו. What was ultimately the main reason for יוסף to go see his father? The answer is in the words וירא אליו, and as רש"י explains, that יוסף appeared to his father. The primary intention that יוסף went out to greet his father was to honor his father and give him the pleasure of seeing his long lost son. Although יוסף's desire to see and be his father was totally appropriate, nevertheless, יוסף did the mitzvah of כיבוד אב, without any other motives.

We see from here the גבורה, the tremendous inner strength that יוסף possessed. He completely took his own desires and feelings out of the equation and thought only of his father. יוסף understood that in order to have the מצוה בשלימות of כיבוד אב, a pure mitzvah, it must be done for the sake of the mitzvah alone. Once we bring in our own personal motives for doing mitzvos, it loses its value to a certain degree as a mitzvah. On the other hand, if we think about others when we do an otherwise selfish act, we can transform our ordinary activity into a mitzvah.

Have a good Shabbos.

Rabbi Yitzchok Davis

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