

## Parshat Vayigash 5778

After Yosef had revealed himself to his brothers, he told them to go back to their father Yaacov in order to bring him down to Mitzrayim. Just before they leave, Yosef says three words to them (45:24), **אל תרגזו בדרך**. The meforshim are interested in what this word “Tirgezu” means and what Yosef was trying to tell his brothers.

Rashi, quoting the gemora in Taanis 10b, says that Yosef taught them two lessons. First, when you go on journey, do not get busy with complex halachic discourse. The Sifsay Chachamim explain that according to this view, Rashi understands the word Tirgezu as meaning “to stray”, and the possuk is telling us that it is best not to get involved with complex halachic matters whilst on a journey, as you are likely to make a mistake in the outcome of your discussions.

Rashi’s second explanation is that when you are travelling, don’t take 'big steps' and rush to get there, but make sure that you leave and return to the city whilst it is still light. Again, the Sifsay Chachamim explain that in this instance Rashi understands the word Tirgezu to mean not to “overdo” it on the way.

The gemora covers two scenarios; if by overdoing it, Yosef meant not to rush, which he reacted to by saying not to take big steps, or if Yosef meant not overdoing it by spending too long on the road, which would be controlled by getting to the next town before it got dark. Either way, Yosef was concerned about not trying to travel each day, more than is sensible.

Clearly, Yosef wanted to teach some lessons about the safest and best way to travel. But why did he think that they needed these lessons now, which presumably they didn’t know from home or might have forgotten.

Rav Yosef Salant, who lived in Yeusholayim last century, and who wrote a beautiful payrush, the באר יוסף, suggests that, now that Yosef had revealed himself, he wanted to teach them about how he perceived that his sale had come about and how the same mistakes could be prevented in the future.

R Salant says that Yosef accepted that the brothers thought what they had done when they sold him, was correct. We know that when the Torah told us in Miketz **דתינה גלכה** that the brothers felt that Yosef was to be dealt within the law (דת); and they had paskened that this was the appropriate way to sentence him for the loshon hora that

they felt he had spoken about them. Therefore Yosef gave them the lesson that we know now, *basically* that men cannot multi task. If the brothers were on a difficult journey, they should not have made a major decision sealing Yosef's fate without either waiting until they returned to the city, or until they could consult with Yaacov, even if they had the best of intentions.

By trying to resolve difficult halachic matters whilst they were preoccupied with a journey, they erred in their conclusion and the rest, as they say, is history. Yosef therefore warned them now, Al Tirgezu Baderech, before they started another journey, don’t make the same mistake and try to come to halachic conclusions whilst you are preoccupied with other matters.

In the same context, given through Rashi’s second explanation, Yosef told them, 'do not take big steps'. The gemora in Sanhedrin(7b) asks how we know that Dayanim should be patient in judgement; because at the end of parshat Yisro the Torah gives us the halachos that Cohanim should not run up to the mizbeach, and this commandment is juxtaposed to the words **ואלה המשפטים**, these are the judgements. This teaches us that in the same way that the Cohanim were told not to take big steps and run up to the mizbeach, so the dayanim should not rush to come to a conclusion on matters of halachos. According to this explanation Yosef informs the brothers, that if they would not have rushed to come to a conclusion about his fate, and would have taken a bit more time to consult, they may not have made such a costly mistake.

This also explains the second half of the sentence in gemora taanis that Rashi quoted, 'because if you take big steps, it takes 1/500th of your sight away'. Yosef scolded his brothers that they were not looking at things clearly when they came to their decisions, and therefore mistakes were made.

The famous gemora in nidda tells us **אל תקרי הליכות אלא הלכות** which perhaps we can paraphrase as halachos are not formed in the time it takes to have a quick stroll. Coming to the correct conclusions on important matters of halacha, takes time to think and time to consult with others. This was the message that Yosef gave to his brothers in the words **אל תרגזו בדרך**.

We all have busy lives and it is easy to fall into the habit of making big decisions without sufficient thought. We can learn from Yosef’s three words of mussar that important decisions, and certainly matters of halacha, should not be rushed or concluded whilst trying to do something else.