

Kinder Torah®

Parashas Vayigash

Pisukei DiZimra

Avi, we are now about to begin Pisukei DiZimra. Prepare yourself."

"Is something special going to happen, Abba?"

"In a manner of speaking, Avi. We are about to enter a higher world. Hashem's creation is divided into four worlds. Parallel to those worlds are the four sections of the morning tefillos. The brochos and korbonos that we have prayed and learned until now correspond to our world – the lowest one. With the beginning of Pisukei DiZimra, we now enter the world of the sun, moon, planets, and stars."¹

"That is fascinating, Abba. What are the other two worlds?"

"Krias Shema and its brochos represent the world of the angels. The fourth and loftiest world is that of the Shechina (Divine Presence). From this noble place, the Almighty bestows His goodness, which preserves and empowers all of creation."

"I am ready, Abba."

Wonderful, Avi. Let me give you a little background on Pisukei DiZimra. The gemora (Brochos 32a) relates that a person should first praise the Almighty and then pray (make requests) to Him. We learn this from Moshe Rabbeinu who first proclaimed, 'Hashem Elokim! You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand, for what power is there in heaven or on earth who can perform like your actions or Your mighty deeds?' Only after that did he request, 'Please let me cross over and see the good land that is on the other side of the Yarden, that fine mountain and the Levanon' (Devarim 3:24-25). Therefore, we first say the Pisukei DiZimra, which contain many praises and acclamations of Hashem's greatness. Only after this, do we pray Krias Shema and Shmoneh Esray.² Pisukei DiZimra also put us into the proper frame of mind to stand before our Creator, as the Baalei Tosafos (Brochos 31a) relate; Pisukei DiZimra prepare us to pray with sincerity and a happiness that comes from fulfilling a mitzvah. They must be said, however, with nachas (calmly)."

"Which pesukim do we say, Abba?"

"The main body consists of the last six chapters of Tehillim, from 'Tehillah Li'Dovid' (145) through 'Kol haneshama tihalil Ka, hallelu'Ka' (150). The Shulchan Auruch HaRav (Orach Chaim 51:1) cites source in the gemora (Brochos 4b), 'All who say 'Tehillah Li'Dovid' three times each day are guaranteed to receive Olam Habo.' Our Sages added the next five mizmorim because they contain ten 'hallelu'Ka's' corresponding to the ten 'hillulim' in Sefer Tehillim. Additionally, they arranged a section from Divrei HaYomim I (16:8-36), 'Hodu laShem koru bi'Shmo'. This dates back to the time of Dovid HaMelech, who fixed the saying of this

passage every day in front of the Aron Kodesh. They subsequently included various verses from Tehillim, and Mizmor Li'Soda (Tehillim 100), before these mizmorim, along with a selection from Nechemia (9:6-11), 'Atto Hu Hashem levadecha', and the Shiras HaYom (Shemos 14:9 – 15:19) after the mizmorim. All this is preceded with a brocho – Boruch She'omar, and concluded with a brocho – Yishtabach."

"What a masterpiece, Abba! These pesukim (verses) must be very powerful."

"Indeed they are Avi. The Siddur Shaar HaRachamim relates that the world is filled with evil forces which seek to destroy our tefillos. The Pisukei DiZimra blaze a path on which our tefillos can travel unharmed to our Father in Heaven."

"May they arrive safe and sound, and accomplish great things!"

"Amen!"



Kinderlach . . .

Your morning prayers can carry you to the highest heights. They begin here in this world, and proceed up to the dwelling place of our Father in Heaven. It is very worthwhile to keep in mind where you are located and what you can accomplish in each section. In Pisukei DiZimra we enter the world of the heavenly bodies. We praise and acclaim the Creator's loftiness, which puts us into the proper frame of mind to stand before Him. The Mizmor of "Ashrei" guarantees us a place in the World to Come. The other mizmorim plant within us an appreciation of the exaltedness of the Almighty. This entire section (which is preceded and concluded with a brocho) has the awesome might to defeat evil forces a blaze a path for our tefillos to travel to their destination. Kinderlach, pray your Pisukei DiZimra with great kavannah (intention). Prepare to take off and soar through the worlds of tefillah.

He's Really Alive!

Yosef is still alive!" (Bereshis 45:26). This is one of the most startling statements in the entire Torah. Yaakov Avinu's son, who was missing for twenty-two years, had been found. What thoughts could have been running through Yaakov's mind when he heard these words? "Is it really Yosef? Even if he is still living, where is he? What has he become after twenty-two years outside of his father's house? Perhaps

he is an idol worshipper (cholila) or a lowly person who runs after his tayvas (desires). Will I even recognize him?" These outcomes were all quite possible.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin shows how the verse itself conveys the message of Yosef's elevated status. "Yosef is still alive!" Alive? Yes, **really** alive. Who is truly alive? The tsaddik. He is living the true life – the life of Torah – which fills every moment with deep meaning, eternal reward, and nachas to The Almighty and His creations. Yosef is alive – truly alive! He is living the pure life of a tsaddik!

This was no small feat in the land of Mitzrayim – the most immoral place in the world. When the brothers first arrived there, they feared the worst for Yosef. They began to search for him in the bad places. Boruch Hashem, they did not find him there. He withstood the test. Rav Sorotzkin darshens, "He was the ruler in the entire land of Mitzrayim!" He rules over his Yetzer Hora in Mitzrayim – that land filled with tumah (impurity).

Yaakov Avinu was still not convinced. What about Yosef's Torah learning? What became of that during the twenty-two years in Mitzrayim? The verse again reveals the answer to this question. "However, when they related to him all the things that Yosef had told them, and he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to transport him, then the spirit of Yaakov, their father, was revived" (45:27). Rashi interprets this verse to mean that Yosef sent Yaakov a sign that he had not forgotten the Torah that they learned together. When Yosef was taken away, they were in the midst of learning the parasha of "egla arufa." Yosef sent "agilos" to his father Yaakov. "Egla" and "agala" are the same word. Those "agilos" conveyed to Yaakov that Yosef had not forgotten the "egla arufa." He remained strong in his Torah learning! And so, we see that Yosef was alive – truly alive. He ruled over his Yetzer Hora, and learned Torah. This is the life of a tsaddik – the true life.

Kinderlach . . .

There is living and there is living. As long as the neshama (soul) is in the guf (body), a person is technically alive. However, what is he doing? Eating, sleeping, and looking for petty pleasures? That is a low level of living. Rav Sorotzkin describes a much higher level of living: working on yourself to overcome your Yetzer Hora. Rashi adds: learning Torah and remembering it (even after twenty-two years). This is living on a higher plane. This is the life of a tsaddik. We have Yosef as our example of how to live life. After all those years, he was really alive.

¹ Siddur Iyun HaTefillah p. 60

² Aruch HaShulchan Orach Chaim 51:1