

## פרשת וישב

Twenty-two years is a generation, more or less, in our times at least. A generation is the time period that it takes for one set of parents to bring forth their offspring and ready them to build *their* own families.

Twenty-two years is the time span in which Yosef was missing from his father's house.

Now, the Torah allows us to keep track of Yosef during those intervening years. We follow his life, track his movements and are kept aware of his comings and goings.

During that same time period we have sparse information regarding his family in Eretz Yisroel.

Let us think about what we know regarding those two decades plus two years in those two arenas – that of Yaakov and his family and that of Yosef.

The Torah makes the time span very clear. At the very beginning of our Parshas Vayeshev (B'reishis Perek 37/Posuk 2) we are told:

אֵלֶּה תִּלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת אָחָיו בְּצֹאן וְהוּא נֶעַר אֶת  
בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת בְּנֵי זְלֹפָה נְשֵׁי אָבִיו וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם רָעָה אֶל אָבִיהֶם:

These are the generations of Yaakov – Yosef was seventeen years old and was shepherding sheep with his brothers and he was a lad with the children of Bilhoh and the children of Zilpoh and he brought their bad reports to their father.

We read in next week's Parshas Miketz (Perek 41/Posuk 46):

וַיֹּסֵף בֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בָּעֶמְדוֹ לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף מִלִּפְנֵי פַרְעֹה וַיַּעֲבֵר  
בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Yosef was thirty years old when he stood before Par'o the King of Egypt; Yosef went out before Par'o and he passed throughout the entire Land of Egypt.

Yosef interpreted Par'o's dreams in a way that Par'o accepted and Par'o appointed Yosef to his high office when Yosef was thirty years old.

Until Yaakov was told that Yosef was alive another nine years passed – the seven years of plenty and two years of famine. And thus Yosef and Yaakov were reunited only after twenty-two years.

Yosef's life during that time was a relatively open book. He was sold many times until he was purchased as a slave by his Egyptian master and successfully rose in rank until he was the chief executive of that high-ranking official.

The episode with his master's wife caused him to be thrown into jail where he remained until Par'o had his dreams and then Yosef interpreted them, rose to prominence and led the Egyptian people with great authority. All of the details are well-known and explicit.

However, the events that occurred simultaneously in Eretz Yisroel are almost a completely closed book.

We are given very little information.

When Yaakov is told that Yosef was devoured by a wild animal, Yaakov's reaction is vivid. We read in our Parsha (Perek 37/P'sukim 31-35):

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת כְּתֹנֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁחֲטוּ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים וַיִּטְבְּלוּ אֶת הַכְּתֹנֶת בַּדָּם: וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת כְּתֹנֶת הַפְּסִים וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל אָבִיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֹאת מְצָאנוּ הַכֹּרֶן נָא הַכְּתֹנֶת בְּנֵךְ הוּא אִם לֹא: וַיִּכְרֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כְּתֹנֶת בְּנֵי חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלְתָּהּוּ טָרֵף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף: וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שְׂמֹלְתָיו וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁק בְּמַתְנָיו וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל בְּנוֹ יָמִים רַבִּים: וַיִּקְמוּ כָל בְּנָיו וְכָל בָּנֹתָיו לִנְחָמוֹ וַיִּמָּאן לְהִתְנַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֵרֹד אֶל בְּנֵי אָבִי שְׂאֵלָה וַיִּבֶךְ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו:

The brothers took the cloak of Yosef and they slaughtered a goat and they dipped the coat into the blood. They sent the striped coat and they brought it to their father and they said, 'We found this. Attend to it; is it the coat of your son or not?'

Yaakov recognized it and he said, 'It is the cloak of my son; a wild animal consumed him; Yosef has been torn to pieces.'

Yaakov tore his clothes and placed sackcloth upon his sides and he mourned for his son for many days. All of Yaakov's sons and daughters arose to comfort him and he refused to be comforted and he said, 'Because I will go down to the grave to the my son in mourning;' his father cried for him.

Rashi writes:

ימים רבים - עשרים ושתים שנהג משפירש ממנו עד שירד יעקב למצרים...כנגד עשרים ושתים שנה שלא קיים יעקב כבוד אב ואם. עשרים שנה שהיה בבית לבן, ושתי שנים בדרך בשובו מבית לבן, שנה וחצי בסכות וששה חדשים בבית אל וזה שאמר ללבן לעיל (לא/מא<sup>1</sup>) זה לי עשרים שנה בביתך, לי הן, עלי הן, וסופי ללקות כנגדן:

*Many days* – twenty-two years Yaakov mourned from the time that Yosef left him until Yaakov went down into Egypt.

Those twenty-two years are for the twenty-two years that Yaakov did not fulfil the Mitzvah of honoring *his* parents: Twenty years that he was in the House of Lovon and two years on the road when he was returning from the House of Lovon- the year and one-half in *Sukkos*<sup>2</sup> and the six months in Beit El.

That is what Yaakov said to Lovon, 'The twenty years that were *for me* in your house' – they were for me, they are upon me – I will eventually be punished for them.

The constant mourning that Yaakov Ovinu observed included more than mourning for the loss for his son alone. The connection that Yaakov Ovinu made

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<sup>1</sup> The entire verse reads:

זֶה לִי עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתְךָ עַבְדְּתִיךָ אַרְבַּע עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה בְּשֵׂתֵי בְּנֹתֶיךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאנְךָ וַתַּחֲלֶף אֶת מִשְׁכְּרְתִי עֶשְׂרֵת מָנִים:

This is *for me* twenty-years in your house; I worked for you for fourteen years for your two daughters and for six years I worked for your sheep; you changed my salary 10 times.

<sup>2</sup> We read in Parshas Vayishlach (Perek 33/Posuk 17):

וַיַּעֲקֹב נָסַע סֹכְתָה וַיָּבֵן לוֹ בַּיִת וַיִּמְקְנֶהוּ עֵשָׂה סֹכֶת עַל כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם סֹכוֹת:

Yaakov travelled to Sukkos and he built a house for himself and he made huts for his flocks; therefore he called the name of the place *Sukkos*.

Rashi writes:

ויבן לו בית - שהה שם שמונה עשר חדש, קיץ וחורף וקיץ. סכות קיץ, בית חורף, סכות קיץ:

*He built for himself a house* – he tarried there eighteen months, a summer, a winter, a summer. He built huts for the summer and a house for the winter. The *sukkos* were for the summer.

between his absence from his father Yitzchak Ovinu and Yaakov's present loss required Yaakov to regret the abandonment of his father and to do *teshuva*.

Yaakov Ovinu was possessed of overwhelming personal grief and overwhelming guilt as to his role in Yosef being stricken.

We understand the depth of the sadness that overtook Yaakov Ovinu by reminding ourselves which the Torah teaches us when that sadness came to its end.

We read in Parshas Vayigash (B'reishis Perek 45/Posuk 27):

וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם וַיֵּרָא אֶת הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף  
לְשִׂאת אֹתוֹ וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אָבִיהֶם:

The sons spoke to Yaakov all of the words of Yosef that he spoke to them, and Yaakov saw the wagons that Yosef sent to carry him; the spirit of Yaakov their father was enlivened.

Rashi writes there:

ותחי רוח יעקב - שרתה עליו שכינה שפירשה ממנו:

*The spirit of their father was enlivened-* The *Shechinah* that departed from Yaakov was upon him<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> With this information we are able to understand the caveat that Rashi writes in Parshas Miketz. We read there (Perek 42/Posuk 1):

וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֵשׁ שֹׁבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לְמָה תִּתְרָאוּ:

Yaakov saw that there was a supply in Egypt and Yaakov said to his sons, 'Why are you looking at each other?'

Rashi writes there:

וירא יעקב כי יש שבר במצרים - ומהיכן ראה, והלא לא ראה אלא שמע, שנאמר (בראשית מב/ב) הנה שמעתי וגו', ומהו וירא, ראה באספקלריא של קדש שעדיין יש לו שבר במצרים. ולא היתה נבואה ממש להודיעו בפירוש שזה יוסף:

*Yaakov saw that there a supply in Egypt* – From where did he see? Is it not that he did not see but *heard* as it says 'Yaakov said, 'Behold I have heard etc.'? What does it mean that 'he saw'?

It means that Yaakov saw through a holy vision that there was a *supply* in Egypt. This was not a true prophecy that would tell him clearly and explicitly that the 'supply' was Yosef.

Yaakov Ovinu was bereft of his intimate connection with the Ribbono Shel Olom.

For twenty-two years Yaakov Ovinu cried for lost son, cried for his inappropriate behavior towards his parents and cried for the loss of the palpable presences of the Shechinah.

And not only Yaakov Ovinu was engulfed in sadness. His sons, as well, were surrounded by their own sadness.

First, of course, we can only begin to imagine the ongoing guilt and incessant remorse that Yaakov's sons felt. They attempted to console him; Yaakov would not be consoled. Even if the sons were completely innocent and bore no blame or responsibility regarding Yosef's fate they undoubtedly would have been possessed by unbearable sorrow seeing their father's sadness. But, now, their guilt was overwhelming and there was no escaping that guilt. Day in and day out they bore witness to the grave iniquity that they performed.

We understand the gravity of their feelings when we read of their resolve when they went to Egypt to purchase the food that they needed in face of the severe famine that had overtaken them.

We read in Parshas Miketz (Perek 42/Posuk 3):

וַיֵּרְדוּ אַחֵי יוֹסֵף עִשָּׂרָה לְשֹׁבֵר בָּר מִמִּצְרַיִם:

The brothers of Yosef, ten of them, went down to get a supply of grain in Egypt.

*Rashi* writes:

וַיֵּרְדוּ אַחֵי יוֹסֵף - וְלֹא כָתוּב בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב, מִלְּמַד שֶׁהָיוּ מִתְחַרְטִים בְּמִכִּירְתוֹ וְנָתְנוּ לָבֶם לְהַתְנַהֵג עִמּוֹ בְּאַחוּהוֹ וּלְפָדוֹתוֹ בְּכָל מַמּוֹן שִׁיפְסְקוּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

*The brothers of Yosef went down* – The Posuk did not write 'The sons of Yaakov' and this teaches us that the brothers were regretful regarding the sale of Yosef and they fully intended to behave with him in a brotherly way and to redeem him at any cost that the Egyptians would demand from them.

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Rashi *must* explain that what Yaakov saw was not a true prophecy because his prophetic gift was non-functioning during those twenty-two years until it was revived and revitalized when he was informed that Yosef was among the living.

That is, we would have expected the Torah to write ‘the sons of Yaakov’ because that is how this section begins with the earlier verse (ibid. Posuk 1) writing:

וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יָשׁ שָׂכַר בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לָמָּה תִּתְרָאוּ:  
Yaakov saw that there was a supply in Egypt and Yaakov said to his sons,  
‘Why are you looking at each other?’

Perhaps this was the first opportunity that presented itself to the brothers to seek out Yosef in Egypt. Whatever the case, it is apparent that such was on their mind, at least, always.

In addition, Yehuda had his own personal troubles that emerged from the sale of Yosef. We read in our Parsha (Perek 38/Posuk 1):

וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֵד יְהוּדָה מֵאֶת אָחָיו וַיֵּט עַד אִישׁ עַדְלָמִי וְשָׁמוּ חִירָה:  
It was at that time and Yehuda went down from his brothers and he turned  
to an Adulamite man whose name was Chira.

If all that the Torah was interested in sharing with us was Yehuda’s association with *Chira*, the phrase ‘from his brothers’ is unnecessary. If Yehuda went there, as we are told, then we understand that his brothers didn’t go. Why was it necessary to mention them?

Rashi explains:

וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהוּא - למה נסמכה פרשה זו לכאן, והפסיק בפרשתו של יוסף, ללמד שהורידוהו אחיו מגדולתו כשראו בצרת אביהם, אמרו אתה אמרת למכרו, אלו אמרת להשיבו היינו שומעים לך:

*It was at that time* – Why is this section placed here, interrupting the section dealing with the sale of Yosef? This teaches us that Yehuda’s brothers lowered Yehuda’s status when they saw the troubles of their father. The brothers said to Yehuda, ‘You told us to sell Yosef [and we did based on your words]. Had you told us to return him to our father, we would have listened to you.’

Yehuda was destined for leadership. The blessings that Yaakov will bestow upon his sons decades later indicate this.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Within the blessings that Yehuda will receive, we read (B’reishis Perek 49/Posuk 10):

לא יסור שִׁבְט מִיְהוּדָה וּמִחֻקֵּק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי יָבֹא שִׁילָה שְׁלִלוּ וְלוֹ יִקְהֶת עַמִּים:

It was Yehuda who said (Perek 37/P'sukim 26-27):

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל אָחָיו מַה בַּצֵּעַ כִּי נַהַרְגְךָ אֶת אָחִינוּ וְכִסִּינוּ אֶת דַּמּוֹ: לָכֵן וְנִמְכְּרֶנּוּ לְיִשְׁמַעֲאֵלִים וַיְדַנוּ אֶל תְּהִי בּוֹ כִּי אָחִינוּ בְּשָׂרֵנוּ הוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אָחָיו:

Yehuda said to his brothers, 'What money is there if we kill our brother and cover his blood. Go and sell him to the Ishmaelites our hand should not be against him because he is our brother, our flesh; his brothers heard.

This lowering of his status was just the beginning of years of sorrow and travail and shame that Yehuda experienced as we read in that section of our Parsha regarding his sons and that which befell them.

One may ask: the guilt over the sale of Yosef does not include either Reuven or Binyomin, neither of whom participated in the sale of Yosef. What was their lives like during this time?

Reuven certainly tried to comfort his father was thus in great discomfort over his father's grief as well as the fact that Reuven had his own personal issue to resolve.

Reuven was opposed to the sale. The Torah testifies to that effect as we read (Perek 37/P'sukim 21-22):

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלָהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִכְנּוּ נַפְשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם רְאוּבֵן אֶל תִּשְׁפְּכוּ דָם הַשְּׁלִיכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִדְבַּר וַיֵּד אֶל תִּשְׁלַחוּ בּוֹ לְמַעַן הִצִּיל אֹתוֹ מִיָּדָם לְהָשִׁיבוֹ אֶל אָבִיו:

Reuven heard the plans of the brothers to kill Yosef and Reuven saved Yosef from their hand and he said, 'Let us not kill him'. Reuven said to them, 'do not spill blood; cast him into this pit in the wilderness and no hand should be sent against him'; [Reuven said this] in order to save Yosef from his brothers and to return him to his father.

Why, in fact, didn't Reuven's intent to save Yosef materialize? Why wasn't Reuven in the area when the other brothers sold Yosef?

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The scepter will not turn from Yehuda and neither the scepter of law-making from between his legs; until he will come to the Moshiach and the nations will gather to him.

Rashi explains in our Parsha that Reuven had his own issues to repair. The Posuk (Perek 37/Posuk 30) reads:

וַיָּשָׁב אֶל אָחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הַיֵּלֶד אֵינּוּ וְאֲנִי אָנֹכִי אֲנִי בָּא:

Reuven returned to his brothers and he said, 'the boy is not there'. What will I do?

Rashi writes:

וישב ראובן - ובמכירתו לא היה שם... עסוק היה בשקו ובתעניתו על שבלבל יצועי אביו:

*Reuven returned* – He wasn't there at the sale because he was involved in his sackcloth and fasting because he mixed the beds of his father.

We read in Parshas Vayishlach (Perek 35/P'sukim 19-22):

וַתָּמָת רָחֵל וַתִּקָּבֵר בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרָתָה הוּא בֵּית לָחֶם: וַיַּצַּב יַעֲקֹב מִצֵּבָה עַל קְבֻרָתָהּ הוּא מִצֵּבַת קְבֻרַת רָחֵל עַד הַיּוֹם: וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵה מִהֶלְאָה לְמִגְדַּל עֵדֶר: וַיְהִי בְּשָׁכְנוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ הַהוּא וַיֵּלֶךְ רְאוּבֵן וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת בְּלָהָה פִּילְגֶשֶׁת אֲבִיו וַיִּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר:

Rochel died and she was buried on the road to Efrata which is Beis Lechem. Yaakov placed a monument upon her grave – that is the burial place of Rochel until this day. Yisroel traveled and he turned his/her<sup>5</sup> tent from farther on to Migdal Eider. When Yisroel was dwelling in that land, Reuven went and laid with Bilhah, the handmaiden of his father and Yisroel heard; the sons of Yaakov were twelve.

Rashi explains:

וישכב - מתוך שבלבל משכבו מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו שכבה. ולמה בלבל וחלל יצועיו, שכשמתה רחל נטל יעקב מטתו שהיתה נתונה תדיר באהל רחל ולא בשאר אהלים ונתנה באהל בלהה, בא ראובן ותבע עלבון אמו, אמר אם אחות אמי היתה צרה לאמי, שפחת אחות אמי תהא צרה לאמי, לכן בלבל:

*He laid* – since Reuven mixed the bed of Yaakov the Torah writes as if he laid with Bilhah.

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<sup>5</sup> The spelling of the word, the *k'siv*, indicates 'her tent'; its pronunciation, the *kri*, when read means 'his tent'.



Why did he mix the beds and profane them<sup>6</sup>? When Rochel died, Yaakov took his bed that was always in the tent of Rochel, and not in the other tents, and moved it to the tent of Bilhoh. Reuven came and demanded honor for the insult to his mother Leah. He said, 'if my mother's sister was a competing wife for my mother, should it be that the maidservant of my mother's sister be a competitive wife?' That is why he mixed the beds.

Thus, years later, Reuven continued to repent and flagellate himself over his untoward act of interfering with the most personal life of his father.

Yaakov Ovinu is in constant mourning; the brothers grieve over their father's sadness, promising to mend their ways; Yehuda is seemingly removed from the immediate family constellation; Reuven must atone for a grievous act.

But, it would seem that Binyomin's plight was better. Certainly, he, too, was terribly saddened by his father's grief; but Binyomin had no guilt whatsoever regarding the sale of Yosef.

However, we learn that Binyomin's grief over that sale was more profound than that of his other siblings.

When the brothers appeared before *Tzofnas Pa'aneach*, Yosef's Egyptian alter-ego, we read the following exchange, together with Rashi's elucidation. The Torah writes (Perek 29/P'sukim 29-30) in Parshas Miketz:

וַיִּשָׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת בְּנֵימִין אָחִיו בֶּן אִמּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲזֶה אַחֲיֶכֶם הֶקְטַן אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר אָ...לִקִּים יְחַנֵּךְ בְּנִי: וַיִּמְהַר יוֹסֵף כִּי נִכְמְרוּ רַחֲמָיו אֶל אָחִיו וַיִּבְקֶשׁ לְבָכוֹת וַיָּבֹא הַחֲדָרָה וַיִּבְךְ שָׁמָּה:

Yosef raised his eyes and he saw his brother Binyamin, the son of his mother, and he said, 'Is this your little brother that you spoke to me?' Yosef said, 'May G-d favor you, my son.' Yosef hurried because his mercies towards his brother became heated and he wanted to cry; he entered the room and cried there.

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<sup>6</sup> This is taken from the words Yaakov used when speaking to Reuven when Yaakov blessed the tribes. See Parshas Vayechi (B'reishis Perek 49/Posuk 4).

Evidently, Yosef recognized Binyamin immediately. If the reason for his tears was seeing Binyamin, why didn't Yosef cry immediately? Why did he wait until after the small speech and blessing that he gave?

Rashi elucidates:

כי נכמרו רחמיו - שאלו יש לך אח מאם, אמר לו אח היה לי ואיני יודע היכן הוא. יש לך בנים, אמר לו יש לי עשרה, אמר לו ומה שמם, אמר לו (להלן מו/כא<sup>7</sup>) בלע ובכר וגו', אמר לו מה טיבן של שמות הללו, אמר לו כולם על שם אחי והצרות אשר מצאוהו, בלע שנבלע בין האומות. בכר שהיה בכור לאמי. אשבאל ששבאו אל. גרא שנתגייר באכסניא. ונעמן, שהיה נעים ביותר. אחי וראש אחי היה וראשי היה. מופים מפי אביו למד. וחופים שלא ראה חופתי ולא ראיתי אני חופתו. וארד שירד לבין האומות, כדאיתא במסכת סוטה (לו ב) מיד נכמרו רחמיו:

*His mercies became heated* – Yosef asked Binyamin, 'Do you have a brother from your mother's side?' Binyamin said to him, 'I had a brother and I do not know where he is.' Yosef asked, 'Do you have sons?' Binyamin answered, I have ten sons, *Bela*, *Becher*, etc.'

Yosef asked, 'What is the nature of those names?'

Binyamin replied, 'They are all regarding my brother and the troubles that he encountered. *Be'la* (בלע) because he was swallowed up among the nations. *Becher* (בכר) because he was the first-born (בכור) of my mother. *Ashbo'el* (אשבאל) because he was taken captive (נשבה) by G-d (א...ל). *Gera* because he lived in someone else's home (גר). *Na'aman* because he was so pleasant (נעים). *Achi* and *Rosh* because he is my brother and my head. *Mupim* (מופים) because he learned from the mouth of his father (מפי). *Chupim* (חופים) because he did not see my *Chuppah* and I did not see his. *Ard* (ארד) because he went down (ירד) among the nations.

All of this is explained in Masseches Sotah.

Binyamin had no guilt regarding Yosef's sale but he had no respite from it either. His entire life was involved in missing Yosef and mourning his loss and imbuing within his own family how much Yosef meant to him.

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<sup>7</sup> The entire verse reads:

וּבְנֵי בִנְיָמִן בְּלַע וּבְכָר וְאַשְׁבֵּל גְּרָא וְנַעֲמָן אַחֵי וְרֹאשׁ מְפִים וְחֹפִים וְאַרְדָּ:

The sons of Binyamin were Be'la, Becher, Ashbel, Geira, Naaman, Achi, Rosh, Mupim, Chupim and Ard.

We now have a picture of the House of Yaakov Ovinu, the House of Yaakov Ovinu sans Yosef. The house is terribly sad because the loss of Yosef undermined its entirety.

That is how our Parshas begins, as we saw above:

אלה תלדות יעקב יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה היה רעה את אחיו בצאן והוא נער את  
בני בלהה ואת בני זלפה נשי אביו ויבא יוסף את דבתם רעה אל אביהם:

These are the generations of Yaakov – Yosef was seventeen years old and was shepherding sheep with his brothers and he was a lad with the children of Bilhoh and the children of Zilpoh and he brought their bad reports to their father.

Rashi writes:

אלה תולדות יעקב -...ומדרש אגדה דורש, תלה הכתוב תולדות יעקב ביוסף מפני  
כמה דברים, אחת שכל עצמו של יעקב לא עבד אצל לבן אלא ברחל, ושהיה זיו  
איקונין של יוסף דומה לו, וכל מה שאירע ליעקב אירע ליוסף, זה נשטם וזה נשטם,  
זה אחיו מבקש להרגו וזה אחיו מבקשים להרגו, וכן הרבה בבראשית רבה (פד ו).

*These are the generations of Yaakov* – Midrash Aggadah interprets this phrase thusly: the Torah makes the generations of Yaakov dependent upon Yosef for many reasons. First, the very reason that Yaakov worked for Lovon was for Rochel. Also, the appearance of Yosef was similar to that of Yaakov. Finally, all that occurred to Yaakov occurred to Yosef: this one was hated and that one was hated. This one – his brother sought to kill him and that one: his brothers sought to kill him. And there is much more in Midrash B'reishis Rabba.

Yosef was the very substance of Yaakov (כל עצמו של יעקב); his absence, especially under the circumstances that were, affected the very being of Yaakov and his family.

And where was Yosef all of this time?

It is very true. Yosef was subjected to 13 years of torment, beginning with his sale and until Par'o made his dramatic appointment.

There is no possible way to minimize the travails of Yosef.

On the other hand we find a very strong criticism of him later in our Parsha.

Immediately prior to his attempted seduction by the wife of Poti Phera, we read (Perek 39/P'sukim 5-6):

וְיִהְיֶה יוֹסֵף מְאֹד הַפְּקִיד אֹתוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ וַיְבָרַךְ ה' אֶת בֵּית הַמִּצְרִי בְּגִלְלַל יוֹסֵף  
וְיִהְיֶה בְּרֶכֶת ה' בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ בְּבַיִת וּבִשְׂדֵהוּ: וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בְּיַד יוֹסֵף וְלֹא יָדַע  
אֶתוֹ מֵאוּמָה כִּי אִם הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר הוּא אוֹכֵל וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יָפֵה תֹאֵר וַיִּפֶּה מְרֻאָה:

It was from when that he appointed Yosef over his household and over all that he had, Hashem blessed the house of the Egyptian because of Yosef; the blessing of G-d was upon all he had, in his home and in the field. He left all that there was in the hand of Yosef and he did not know anything at all except for the bread that he ate; Yosef was handsome in his looks.

Rashi writes:

וְיִהְיֶה יוֹסֵף יָפֵה תֹאֵר - כִּיּוֹן שֶׁרָאָה עֲצָמוֹ מוֹשֵׁל, הִתְחִיל אוֹכֵל וְשׂוֹתָהּ וּמְסַלֵּסל בְּשַׁעֲרוֹ,  
אֵמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֲבִיךָ מִתַּאֲבָל וְאֵתָהּ מְסַלֵּסל בְּשַׁעֲרֶךָ, אֲנִי מִגְרָה בֶּךָ אֵת  
הַדּוֹב, מִיָּד וְתִשָּׂא אֶשֶׁת אֲדוֹנָיו וְגו' - כָּל מְקוֹם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אַחֵר סְמוּךְ:

*Yosef was handsome in his looks* – once he saw himself in a ruling position, Yosef began to eat and to drink and to curl his hair. Hashem said, ‘Your father is mourning and you are curling your hair? I will sic the bear against you.’

Immediately, we read, ‘the wife of his master etc.’.

Wherever the Torah writes *achar*, and not *acharei*, it refers to an even that occurred immediately following.

Rashi is referring to the next verse that follows, both in the text and in history that reads:

וְיִהְיֶה אַחֵר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְתִשָּׂא אֶשֶׁת אֲדוֹנָיו אֶת עֵינֶיהָ אֶל יוֹסֵף וְתֹאמַר שְׁכַבָּה עִמִּי:

It was after these things and the wife of his master raised her eyes towards Yosef and she said, ‘sleep with me’.

At first glance, it may appear that Yosef is being treated harshly. After harrowing days, weeks or months, he has a respite.

He is finally able to have a good meal and wishes to savor it. He is finally able to wash himself and to clean himself and to make himself presentable as befits a person who is assuming an important leadership role.

What did Yosef do that was unexpected?

Furthermore, he is criticized for not being more caring regarding his father's mourning. Would Yosef have helped his father by eating less, by drinking less, by not attending to his physical well-being and appearance?

A closer investigation regarding that which transpired regarding Yosef following his sale may shed some light on what occurred and the expectations to which Yosef was held.

When we read of the callousness of Yosef's brothers at the time of the sale, we may fail to give appropriate emphasis to Yosef himself.

We read (Perek 37/Posuk 25):

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לֶאֱכֹל לֶחֶם וַיִּשְׂאוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה אַרְחַת יִשְׁמַעֲאֵלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד וּגְמֻלֵיהֶם  
נִשְׂאִים נְכֹאת וְצָרִי וְלֹט הוֹלְכִים לְהוֹרִיד מִצְרָיִם:

The brothers sat down to eat bread and raised their eyes and they saw a Ishmaelite caravan coming from Gil'ad and their camels were carrying various spices and fragrant plants and they were going to take the goods down to Egypt.

Rashi asks to understand the reason that the Torah had to teach us the various goods that the merchants in that caravan were carrying. He explains:

וגמליהם נושאים וגו' - למה פרסם הכתוב את משאם, להודיע מתן שכרן של צדיקים, שאין דרכן של ערביים לשאת אלא נפט ועטרן שריחן רע, ולזה נזדמנו בשמים שלא יוזק מריח רע:

*Their camels were carrying etc.* – Why did the Torah publicize their loads of merchandise? It was to make known the reward that the righteous accrue. It was the nature of Arab caravans to carry kerosene and other foul-smelling material. But for Yosef fragrant spices were loaded on to this caravan so that Yosef should not be harmed whatsoever.

It is reasonable to assume that Yosef would have been doubly frightened at what awaited him from this purchasers. Not only would he not have known to whom he would be sold, but the very journey itself would have been unbearable to the very offensive merchandise that would accompany him.

What a relief he must have felt when the merchandise was not only inoffensive but even pleasant!

What do we expect from *Yosef ben Yaakov Ovinu*? What do we expect from one who was the very substance of Yaakov (כל עצמו של יעקב)? Would he attribute it to good fortune and good luck or would he have been aware that the Ribbono Shel Olom was watching over him.

Now it might very well be considered unfair to expect from Yosef under such trying circumstances. Perhaps he was in shock from the treatment that the brothers meted out to him. He was thrown into a pit with venomous creatures<sup>8</sup>; his life could have ended then. He was taken into a caravan which might have included murderous travellers. The fact that there were fragrances emitting from the caravan rather than offensive and unbearable odors might not have been able to register with Yosef.

The continuation of the events that are revealed to us find Yosef in the house of Potiphara. As we read above, Yosef rises from a lowly servant to the master of his master's household.

As we read above:

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<sup>8</sup> We read in our Parsha (Perek 37/Posuk 24):

וַיִּקְחֵהוּ וַיְשַׁלְכֵהוּ אֶל הַבְּרֶה וְהַבּוֹר רֵק אֵין בּוֹ מַיִם:

The brothers took Yosef and they cast him into the pit; the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Rashi explains:

והבור רק אין בו מים - ממשמע שנאמר והבור רק, איני יודע שאין בו מים, מה תלמוד לומר אין בו מים, מים אין בו אבל נחשים ועקרבים יש בו:

*The pit was empty; there was no water in it* – Since it says ‘the pit was empty’, don’t I know that there was no water in it? What does ‘there was no water in it’ teach? It teaches that there was no water in it but there were snakes and scorpions in it.

וְיִהְיֶה מֵאִזְ הַפְּקִיד אֶתְּוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ וַיְבָרַךְ ה' אֶת בֵּית הַמִּצְרִי בְּגִלְלַי יוֹסֵף  
וְיִהְיֶה בְּרַכְתּוֹ ה' בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לוֹ בְּבֵית וּבִשְׂדֵהוּ: וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בְּיַד יוֹסֵף וְלֹא יָדַע  
אֶתֹּ מֵאוֹמֶה כִּי אִם הִלְחָם הוּא אֲשֶׁר הוּא אוֹכֵל וְיִהְיֶה יוֹסֵף יִפְהַ תֵּאֵר וַיִּפְהַ מֵרָאָה:

It was from when that he appointed Yosef over his household and over all that he had, Hashem blessed the house of the Egyptian because of Yosef; the blessing of G-d was upon all he had, in his home and in the field. He left all that there was in the hand of Yosef and he did not know anything at all except for the bread that he ate; Yosef was handsome in his looks.

Now we know that Hashem directs everything. What is the reason that the Torah tells us here that it was Hashem Who gave such blessings? The answer is that the Guiding Hand of G-d was apparent to anyone who would have liked to have an objective take on situation.

What do we expect from *Yosef ben Yaakov Ovinu*? What do we expect from one who was the very substance of Yaakov (כל עצמו של יעקב)? Would he attribute it to good fortune and good luck or his unique abilities or would he have been aware that the Ribbono Shel Olom was watching over him. There was an objective truth regarding which he could have been aware.

In this instance, the trauma was most different from that which occurred at the sale and with the caravans. Certainly Yosef was not happy about his enforced servitude. Yet, on the other hand, the servitude in which he found himself was chronic, not acute. Certainly he adjusted well to his situation otherwise he would not have had such power delegated to him.

If one still thinks that it is unfair to have too high expectations from Yosef, the ensuing event should remove such a thought.

After the wife of his master continues to entice Yosef, we finally read (Perek 39/P'sukim 11-12):

וְיִהְיֶה כִּהְיוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֵא הַבַּיְתָה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלֶאכֶתוֹ וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיְתָה שָׁם בְּבַיְתָה:  
וַתִּתְפָּשֶׂהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ לְאֹמֶר שְׁכָבָה עִמִּי וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיֵּנֶס וַיֵּצֵא חוּצָה:

It was on this day that Yosef came to the house to do his work and there was no man from the householders in the house. She grabbed his garment and said, 'lay with me' and he left behind his garment in her hand and he fled and went out to the outside.

Rashi writes:

ויהי כהיום הזה - כלומר ויהי כאשר הגיע יום מיוחד, יום צחוק, יום איד שלהם שהלכו כולם לבית עבודה זרה, אמרה אין לי יום הגון להזקק ליוסף כהיום הזה. אמרה להם חולה אני ואיני יכולה לילך:

*It was on this day* – that is to say, it was when a special day arrived; a day of mirth, their holiday when all went to their house of idolatry, she said, ‘there is no more opportune time than today to be with Yosef clearly, just like today is clear.’ She said to the people of her household, ‘I am sick and I unable to go’.

לעשות מלאכתו - רב ושמואל, חד אמר מלאכתו ממש, וחד אמר לעשות צרכיו עמה, אלא שנראית לו דמות דיוקנו של אביו וכו', כדאיתא במסכת סוטה (דף לו ב):

*To do his work* – Rav and Shmuel disputed. One said that Yosef came to do his actual work and one says that ‘his work’ is a euphemism and he came to be with her.

What stopped him? The face of Yosef’s father, Yaakov, appeared to him as we learn in Masseches Sotah.

Maybe Yosef will say it was good fortune but he cannot deny the miraculous nature of such an event. Yosef had some type of a prophetic vision. And thus, even if until now he was not sufficiently cognizant of the Hand of G-d that was directing all of the events, now he was and thus could apply his awareness retroactively.

And it does not appear that Yosef was unaware of G-d’s Guiding Hand from the events that transpired in the dungeon as well as before he came to Par’o.

With Yosef In the dungeon, we read (Perek 39/P’sukim 21-23):

וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיֵּט אֵלָיו חֶסֶד וַיִּתֵּן חַנוּ בְּעֵינָיו שֶׁר בֵּית הַסֵּהַר וַיִּתֵּן שֶׁר בֵּית הַסֵּהַר אֶת יוֹסֵף אֶת כָּל הָאֲסִירִים אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֵּהַר וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה: אֵין שֶׁר בֵּית הַסֵּהַר רָאָה אֶת כָּל מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ בְּאֲשֶׁר ה' אֶתוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה ה' מִצְלִיחַ:

Hashem was with Yosef and he turned compassion towards him and He gave his favor in the eyes of the officer of the jail. The officer of the jail placed in the hand of Yosef all the prisoners that were in the prison and all



that they did there, Yosef would do. The officer of the prison did not look after anything to do because Hashem was with Yosef; that which Yosef did, Hashem made successful.

Only now do we learn that Yosef took the Divine Providence to heart. We read (Perek 40/Posuk 8):

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו חֲלוֹם חֲלָמְנוּ וּפְתָר אֵין אֵתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא לֹא...לִיקִים פְּתָרְנִים  
סִפְרוּ נָא לִי:

They said to him, 'We dreamt a dream and there is no one to interpret it'; Yosef said to them, 'Are not the explanations from G-d? Tell me, please'.

Was this response to the officers an indication that Yosef had fully integrated the fact that it was the Hand of G-d which was leading him and that it wasn't luck or personal ability that was bringing him success after success even in the direst of circumstances?

I do not know that this verse is conclusive but I think that by comparing it to a very similar Posuk we may be able to answer that specific question.

In Parshas Miketz, Yosef is called to Par'o who tells him to interpret his dreams.

Yosef answers (Perek 41/Posuk 16):

וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת פְּרַעֲהַ לֵאמֹר בְּלַעֲדִי אֵין...לִיקִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת שְׁלוֹם פְּרַעֲהַ:

Yosef answer Par'o saying, 'It is not from me. G-d will answer the welfare of Par'o.'

The word בלעדי is a contraction of two words: בלי אני, without me. Yosef said, 'The interpretation that I will offer has nothing to do with me. It belongs exclusively to G-d.'

The addition of the word בלעדי in this statement of Yosef tells us that at that moment, when he was taken from prison, after abandoning hope, he understood with new profundity that nothing that was happening to him could be explained by any natural means. 'His existence and his success,' he said, were בלעדי, removed from me.'

We know that Yosef was punished twice in the Parshos of Vayeshev and Miketz.

As we saw earlier, Yosef was punished for his vanity, ignoring the suffering of his father who thought that he was dead and who continued to mourn for his son.

We see at the very conclusion of our Parsha a second punishment.

After Yosef provides a positive interpretation for the dream of the Wine Steward of Par'o, Yosef says to him (Perek 40/Posuk 14):

כִּי אִם זָכַרְתָּנִי אֶתְךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר יִטֵּב לְךָ וְעָשִׂיתָ נָא עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְהִזְכַּרְתָּנִי אֶל פַּרְעֹה  
וְהוֹצֵאתָנִי מִן הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה:

If only you will remember me when it will be good for you and you will do a kindness for me and mention me to Par'o and you will take me out from this house.

The events did not turn out as Yosef hoped. Even though, three days later, the Wine Steward was freed as Yosef foretold and it was good for the Wine Steward, he ignored the fervent request of Yosef as we read in the Parsha's ultimate verse (ibid. Posuk 23):

וְלֹא זָכַר שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכַּחֵהוּ:

The Wine Steward did not remember Yosef and he forgot him.

Only two years later<sup>9</sup>, as the first verse of next week's Parshas Miketz teaches, was the Wine Steward forced to remember Yosef.

וְלֹא זָכַר שֵׁר הַמְּשָׁקִים - בּו בְּיוֹם:

*The wine steward did not remember – on that day.*

וַיִּשְׁכַּחֵהוּ - לְאַחַר מִכָּן. מִפְּנֵי שֶׁתִּלְהֶה בּו יוֹסֵף בְּטַחוּנו לְזַכְרוֹ הוֹזַק לֵהיוֹת אֲסוּר עוֹד שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (תְּהִלִּים מ/ה<sup>10</sup>) אֲשֶׁרִי הִגְבֵּר אֲשֶׁר שָׁם ה' מִבְּטָחוֹ וְלֹא פָנָה אֶל רֵהָבִים, וְלֹא בִטַח עַל מִצְרַיִם הַקְּרוּיִם (יִשְׁעִיָּה ל/ז) רֵהָב:

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<sup>9</sup> We read there (B'reishis Perek 41/Posuk 1):

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנָתַיִם יָמִים וּפַרְעֹה חָלַם וְהִנֵּה עֹמֵד עַל הַיָּאֵר:  
It was after two years and Par'o dreamt and he was standing by the Nile.

<sup>10</sup> The entire verse reads:

אֲשֶׁרִי הִגְבֵּר אֲשֶׁר שָׁם ה' מִבְּטָחוֹ וְלֹא פָנָה אֶל רֵהָבִים וְשִׁטִּי כָזָב:

*And he forgot him* – afterwards. Because Yosef made his security dependent on the wine steward to remember him, Yosef had to remain behind bars another two years as it says, ‘Happy is the man who has placed his trust in Hashem and did not turn to *Rehavam*.’ That means that the person doesn’t trust Egypt who are referred to by the name of *Rahav* as we read in Sefer Yeshaya<sup>11</sup>.

Yosef failed to recognize the exclusive Hand of Hashem that directed his life, even in times of crisis. Only after a dozen years, when he came before Par’o was he able to exclaim ‘בלעדי – it is beyond me. My power is tantamount to being non-existent. All that has occurred in these past years had clear evidence of the Hashgacha P’ratis that enveloped me.

In contrast to Yosef, our Father Yaakov was well aware of the Hand of G-d and its dynamic force in his life.

We saw Rashi’s comment above regarding the interpretation of Yaakov’s words to Lovon:

זֶהוּ שֶׁאִמַּר לְלִבְנֵי לֵעִיל (לֹא/מֵאֲמָנָה) זֶה לִי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתְךָ, לִי הֵן, עָלַי הֵן, וְסוֹפִי לְלִקּוֹת כְּנֹגֵדְךָ:

That is what Yaakov said to Lovon, ‘The twenty years that were *for me* in your house’ – they were for me, they are upon me – I will eventually be punished for them.

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Happy is the man who has placed his trust in Hashem and did not turn to *Rehavam* and those who turn to falsehood.

<sup>11</sup> The entire verse reads:

וּמִצְרַיִם הֶבֶל וְרִיק יַעֲזֹרוּ לָכֵן קָרָאתִי לְזֹאת רַהֲבָהּ הֵם שְׁכָבִת:

Egypt is emptiness and vanity are their help; therefore I Hashem call to this conceit and they will be finished.

<sup>12</sup> The entire verse reads:

זֶה לִי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתְךָ עַבְדְּתִיךָ אַרְבַּע עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה בְּשֵׂתֵי בְּנֹתֶיךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאנְךָ וַתַּחֲלֵף אֶת מִשְׁכָּרְתִּי עֶשְׂרֵת מָנִים:

This is *for me* twenty-years in your house; I worked for you for fourteen years for your two daughters and for six years I worked for your sheep; you changed around my salary 10 times.

I have not found a statement that tells us that Yaakov directly associated the tragic events that overtook him and his family who was with him in Eretz Yisroel with what he told Lovon. It very well may be that he did not. But Yaakov was aware of the constant presence of G-d and that the impact of His Providence would be felt.

That is what we read in the beginning of our Parsha after being told of Yosef's dreams (Perek 37/Posuk 11):

וַיִּקְנְאוּ בּוֹ אָחָיו וְאָבִיו שָׁמַר אֶת הַדָּבָר:

Yosef's brothers were jealous of him; his father observed the matter.

Rashi explains:

שמר את הדבר - היה ממתין ומצפה מתי יבא, וכן (ישעיה כו/ב) שומר אמונים...

*Observed the matter* – He was waiting and anticipating when it would happen. Similarly, we read in Sefer Yeshaya: Guarding the faith.

The entire verse in Sefer Yeshaya reads:

פְּתוּחוּ שַׁעְרֵי יְבֵא גוֹי צְדִיק שֹׁמֵר אֱמֻנִים:

Open the gates of the city and let the righteous nation enter; the one who guards the faith.

Rashi explains:

שומר - ששמר וצפה בגלותו ימים רבים לאמונתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שיקיים הבטחתו שהבטיח ע"פ נביאיו לגאלם:

*Guarding* – One who guarded and anticipated the many days, believing in Hashem, until He would fulfil His promise that He made through His prophets to redeem them.

Yaakov was a שומר אמונים. In his suffering he had no doubt that the hand of HaKodosh Boruch Hu was actively directing his life – even though he might not have known the direction that it was going to take.

Yosef on the hand, separate and far from his father, was unable to absorb that sense of השגחה פרטית Divine Providence, that is father radiated.

That radiated sense of Divine Providence was no more evident than at the moment Yaakov, the father who mourned for his son for twenty-two years, was reunited with Yosef at last.

The Torah writes there in Parshas Vayigash (B'reishis Perek 46/Posuk 29):

וַיֹּאסֶר יוֹסֵף מְרֻכָּבְתּוֹ וַיַּעַל לִקְרַאת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו גִּשְׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְאָרְיוֹ וַיִּבְךְּ  
עַל צַוְאָרְיוֹ עוֹד:

Yosef harnessed his chariot and he went up to meet his father Yisroel to Goshen and he appeared to him and Yosef fell on the neck of Yaakov and cried and he cried more on his neck.

Rashi writes:

ויבך על צואריו עוד - יעקב לא נפל על צוארי יוסף ולא נשקו, ואמרו רבותינו שהיה  
קורא את שמע:

*Yosef cried more on Yaakov's neck – But Yaakov did not fall upon the neck of Yosef and did not kiss him. Our Rabbis explained that Yaakov was reciting Krias Shema.*

This verse exemplifies and emphasizes Yaakov's awareness of G-d's Providence in any and all situations. That was the living example that those who were with Yaakov Ovinu in Eretz Yisroel were privilege to see and to learn from. At the height of his emotions, those emotions were directed to the Master of the Universe.

Bereft of that instruction and example, Yosef had to learn the lesson on his own, with additional travail and suffering which he incurred because of his lack of understanding.

In these final Parshos of Sefer B'reishis the Torah provides us with lessons and examples for life, beyond the individual episodes that occurred and their impact upon us.

The contrast between Yaakov and Yosef is not to denigrate Yosef HaTzaddik but, rather, to remind us that even when the events of our lives whirl around us at a dizzying pace and are inexplicable that we must remember that the Hand of G-d is always present.

We may be unable to fathom that meaning of the events of our lives, the good as well as the bad, but we are always obligated to remember that G-d is present.

We turn to the Ribbono Shel Olom to offer prayer for salvation and we turn to Him to give thanks.

If we have the example of a Yaakov we are to learn from that example. If that example is not before us, we must create the atmosphere and the example for others.

In these Parshos, Am Yisroel is entering its first *Golus* phase. We are now in the final phase of exile and are called upon to be שומרי אמונים, looking to HaKodosh Boruch Hu, knowing that He holds the keys to our redemption and seeking His mercy to open the doors to our salvation במהרה בימינו.

Shabbat Shalom

Chanukah Sameach

Rabbi Pollock