

פרשת וישב

The school report read as follows:

Non-Confidential 'Canaanite Social Services Report'

(Sources have given permission to be cited. They are noted in the footnotes to this report.)

I. Year (circa) 2216¹

The subject, Y, is a 17 year old male². The family situation is complicated. The father had 4 wives with multiple children from each one. There are a

¹ Avraham Ovinu was born in 1948. He was 100 years old when Yitzchak was born, that is in the year 2048. Yitzchak Ovinu was 60 years old when Yaakov was born – 2108 and the understanding is that the Shevatim were born one year after the other and thus Yosef was born in the year 2216, when Yaakov Ovinu was circa 91 years of age.

See Rashi to B'reishis Perek 25/Posuk 17 and Rashi to Perek 28/Posuk 9.

² We read in the beginning of this week's Parshas Vayeshev (B'reishis Perek 37/Posuk 2):

אֵלֶּה תִּלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֵעָה אֶת אָחִיו בְּצָאן וְהוּא נֶעַר אֶת בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה נְשֵׁי אָבִיו וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת דְּבָרֵם רָעָה אֶל אָבִיהֶם:

These are the generations of Yaakov: Yosef was seventeen years old; he was a shepherd of the sheep with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhoh and the sons of Zilpoh, his father's wives; Yosef brought their bad reports to their father.

total of 12 sons and at least³ one daughter⁴. Y is somewhat in the middle, with older married siblings and younger ones. The subject's mother died while giving birth to his one full sibling⁵. He and the sibling are being raised by a maid-servant/wife of his father, together with her two children from the father.

³ We read in our Parsha (Perek 37/Posuk 35), following the conclusion that Yaakov reached regarding Yosef's death:

וַיִּקְמוּ כָּל בְּנָיו וְכָל בְּנֹתָיו לְנַחֲמוֹ וַיִּמָּאן לְהִתְנַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶרְדָּ אֶל אָבִי שָׂאלָה וַיִּבְרַךְ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו:
All of Yaakov's sons and daughters arose to comfort him and he refused to be comforted; he said, I will go down to the grave as a mourner for my son; his father cried for him.

The difficulty with this verse is obvious. As will be noted in the next footnote, the Torah only told us about one daughter born to Yaakov Ovinu. In the first explanation that Rashi offers regarding this problem, he writes:

וכל בנותיו - רבי יהודה אומר אחיות תאומות נולדו עם כל שבט ושבט ונשאום.
All of Yaakov's daughters – Rabi Yehuda says, 'Twin sisters were born with each and every *Shevet* and they married them.

⁴ We read in Parshas Vayetze (B'reishis Perek 30/Posuk 21):

וְאַחַר יְלֹדָהּ בַּת וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמָהּ דִּינָה:
Afterwards, Leah gave birth to a daughter and she called her name Dina.

⁵ We read (B'reishis Perek 35/P'sukim 16-19):

וַיִּסְעוּ מִבֵּית אֵל וַיְהִי עוֹד כְּבָרַת הָאָרֶץ לְבוֹא אֶפְרָתָה וַתֵּלֶד רַחֵל וַתִּקְשׁ בְּלִדְתָּהּ: וַיְהִי בְהִקְשָׁתָהּ בְּלִדְתָּהּ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמַּיְלֵדֶת אֵל תִּירָאִי כִּי גַם זֶה לָךְ בֵּן: וַיְהִי בְצֵאת נַפְשָׁהּ כִּי מָתָה וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶן אוֹנִי וְאָבִיו קָרָא לוֹ בְּנֵימִין: וַתָּמֶת רַחֵל וַתִּקָּבֵר בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶפְרָתָה הוּא בֵּית לְחָם:

They traveled from Beit El and when there was a ploughing-day's distance to come to Efros; Rachel began giving birth and she was having a difficult delivery. While she was having her difficult delivery, the midwife said to her, 'Do not fear; also this one will be for you a son'. When her soul left her because she died, she called his name *Ben Oni* and his father called him Binyomin. Rachel died and she was buried on the road towards Efros, which is Bethlehem.

The subject has tense relationships with some of his siblings⁶, for which he is significantly responsible⁷. He also exhibits some narcissistic tendencies⁸ and some grandiose thinking⁹ and seems not to be concerned¹⁰ with the strong negative reactions he elicits from his brothers.

⁶ We read in this week's Parsha (Perek 37/Posuk 4):

וַיִּרְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי אֶתּוֹ אָהַב אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל אָחָיו וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלוֹם:

His brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved more than all of his brothers and they hated him and they were unable to speak with him in peace.

⁷ As we read above:

וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם רָעָה אֶל אָבִיהֶם:

Yosef brought their bad reports to their father.

⁸ Rashi writes to the verse above:

והוא נער - שהיה עושה מעשה נערות, מתקן בשערו ממשמש בעיניו, כדי שיהיה נראה יפה:

He was a lad – He would do acts of immaturity. He would fix his hair and make his eyes look nice in order that he would appear handsome.

⁹ We read (ibid. P'sukim 6-10):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שִׁמְעוּ נָא הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלַמְתִּי: וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי מֵאֲלֵמִים אֲלֵמִים בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה וְהִנֵּה קִמָּה אֲלֵמְתִי וְגַם נִצְבָה וְהִנֵּה תִסְבִּינָה אֲלֵמְתֵיכֶם וְתִשְׁתַּחֲוֶינָן לְאֵלֵמְתִי: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אָחָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עֲלֵינוּ אִם מִשׁוֹל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ וַיִּזְסְפוּ עוֹד שָׂנֵא אֹתוֹ עַל חֲלֻמְתּוֹ וְעַל דְּבָרָיו: וַיִּחַלֵּם עוֹד חֲלוֹם אֲחֵר וַיִּסְפָּר אֹתוֹ לְאָחָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלֻמְתִי חֲלוֹם עוֹד וְהִנֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְאַחַד עֶשְׂרֵת כּוֹכָבִים מִשְׁתַּחֲוִיִּים לִי: וַיִּסְפָּר אֶל אָבִיו וְאֶל אָחָיו וַיִּגְעַר בּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלַמְתָּ הַבּוֹא נְבוֹא אֲנִי וְאִמְךָ וְאָחֶיךָ לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְךָ אֶרְצָה:

Yosef said to his brothers, 'Listen, please, to this dream that I dreamt. Behold, we were bundling sheaves in the middle of the field and behold, my sheaf arose and also stood straight and behold your sheaves surrounded and prostrated to my sheaf.' They said to him, 'Will you certainly reign over us; if you will certainly rule over us?' They continued to hate him because of his dreams and because of his words. He had another dream and he told it to his brothers and he said, 'Behold, I dreamt another dream and behold the sun and the moon and eleven stars were prostrating to me.' He told his father and his brothers and his father censured him and he said to him, 'What is this dream that you dreamt; shall we come, I, your mother and your brothers and prostrate before you to the ground?'

¹⁰ We read (ibid. Posuk 13):

The situation is complicated because of the particular close relationship that Y has with his father. It seems that a particular special and unique gift bestowed to Y from his father raises the ire of his siblings¹¹ because it is of high visibility and perhaps Y flaunts it, as above. The gift may be related to the fact that Y's mother, a younger sister to the other full-wife, seems to have been the favorite of his father's life¹², causing ongoing strain and there had been strife between the sisters¹³. It appears that the

וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל יוֹסֵף הֲלוֹא אַחֶיךָ רְעִים בְּשֶׁכֶם לָכֵה וְאֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֵלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַנְּנִי:
Yisroel said to Yosef, 'Are not your brother grazing in Shechem; go and I will send you to them;' Yosef said, 'Behold I am here.'

Rashi writes:

הנני - לשון ענוה וזריזות, נזדרז למצות אביו, ואף על פי שהיה יודע באחיו ששונאין אותו:
Behold, here I am – This is an expressing of humility and alacrity. He was swift to do the Mitzvah of his father, even though he knew that his brothers hated him.

¹¹ We read (ibid. P'sukim 3-4):

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהֱבֶה אֶת יוֹסֵף מִכָּל בְּנָיו כִּי בֶן זִקְנִים הוּא לוֹ וַעֲשָׂה לוֹ כְּתֹנֶת פָּסִים: וַיֵּרְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי אֹתוֹ אֶהֱבֶה אָבִיהֶם מִכָּל אָחָיו וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יָכְלוּ דַבְּרוֹ לְשָׁלֵם:

Yisroel loved Yosef more than all of his sons because he was the son of his old age; he made him a shirt with silk. The brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his brothers and they hated him and they were unable to speak with him peaceably.

¹² We read in Parshas Vayetze (Perek 31/Posuk 4):

וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב וַיִּקְרָא לְרַחֵל וּלְלֵאָה הַשְּׂדֵה אֶל צֹאנוֹ:

Yaakov sent for and called to Rachel and to Leah to the field to his sheep.

Rashi writes:

ויקרא לרחל וללאה - לרחל תחלה ואחר כך ללאה שהיא עיקר הבית, שבשבילה נזדווג יעקב עם לבן,

He called to Rachel and to Leah – He called Rachel first and then called Leah because Rachel was the significant one of his household. It was for her that Yaakov associated with Lovon.

¹³ We read (ibid. Perek 30/P'sukim 14-15):

וַיֵּלֶךְ רְאוּבֵן בַּיָּמִים קִצִּיר חֲטִיִּם וַיִּמְצֵא דוּדָאִים בְּשֵׂדֵה וַיָּבֵא אֹתָם אֶל לֵאָה אִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר רַחֵל אֶל לֵאָה תְּנִי נָא לִי מִדּוּדָאֵי בְּנֶךָ: וַתֹּאמֶר לֵהּ הִמְעַט קָחְתְּךָ אֶת אִשִּׁי וְלִקְחֹת גַּם אֶת דּוּדָאֵי בְּנֵי וַתֹּאמֶר רַחֵל לָכֵן יִשְׁכַּב עִמָּךְ הַלַּיְלָה תַּחַת דּוּדָאֵי בְּנֶךָ:

Reuven went during the days of the wheat harvest and found *dudoim*-flowers in the field and he brought them to his mother Leah; Rachel said to Leah, 'Give me please from the *dudoim* of your son.' Leah said to her, 'Is it too little for

strain between the two was ameliorated a number of years ago¹⁴ but that strain remains very visible between the various children of the family.

It was deemed relevant to add to this report additional familial information because that may cast light on the whole situation and allow more accurate prognostication.

Y's father has one brother, a twin. They have been odds with one another for many decades, it seems, perhaps from birth¹⁵. A few years ago there was a meeting between the two clans which turned out well¹⁶. However,

you that you took my husband and you will also take the *dudoim* of my son?; Rachel said, 'Therefore he will lay with you tonight in exchange for the *dudoim* of your son.'

¹⁴ When told of the need to leave the house of Lovon, we read what they replied to Yaakov (B'reishis Perek 31/Posuk 14):

וַתַּעַן רָחֵל וְלֵאָה וְתֹאמַרְנָה לּוֹ הֲעוֹד לָנוּ חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה בְּבֵית אָבִינוּ:

Rachel and Leah replied and they said to Yaakov, 'Do we still have a part and an inheritance in our father's house?'

The fact that Yaakov could talk to them both at the same time and that they replied with a coordinated answer indicates some level of rapprochement.

¹⁵ We read (ibid. Perek 25/Posuk 22):

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ וְתֹאמַר אִם כֵּן לָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי וְתִלְךָ לְדָרַשׁ אֶת ה':

The sons ran feverishly inside her and she said, 'If this is so, what is that I am?' She went to inquire of G-d.

Rashi writes:

וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ - כִּשְׁהִיָּתָה עוֹבֵרָת עַל פְּתַח תּוֹרָה שֶׁל שָׁם וְעָבַר יַעֲקֹב רֵץ וּמִפְּרֹכֵס לְצִאתָ, עוֹבֵרָת עַל פְּתַח עֲבוּדָה זָרָה עָשׂוּ מִפְּרֹכֵס לְצִאתָ.

They ran feverishly – When Rachel passed by the Yeshiva of *Shem v'Eiver*, Yaakov ran and shook to get out. When she passed by the door of a place of idolatry, Eisav would shake to get out.

¹⁶ We read (ibid. Perek 33/Posuk 4):

וַיָּרֶץ עֵשָׂו לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיַּחְבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְּאָרוֹ וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכוּ:

Eisav ran to Yaakov to greet him and he hugged him and he fell upon his neck and he kissed him and they cried.

the atmosphere leading up to that meeting was tense and fraught with danger.¹⁷

It is also appropriate to focus on five of the other siblings about whom we have garnered significant information.

D, the one daughter about whom there is clear identification, is a half-sister to Y. A few years ago there was a personal situation which shamed the family¹⁸ and also caused a sharp reaction within the family when two of her full siblings, S and L, decided to take the role of 'avengers' upon themselves.¹⁹ Their actions caused more strife in the family than D's alone, with their father taking a very harsh position against their behavior.²⁰

¹⁷ We read (Perek 32/P'sukim 8-9):

וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּצְרָ לוֹ וַיַּחַץ אֶת הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וְאֶת הַצֹּאן וְאֶת הַבְּקָר וְהַגְּמָלִים לְשְׁנֵי מַחֲנֹת: וַיֹּאמֶר אִם יָבוֹא עֲשׂוֹ אֶל הַמַּחֲנֶה הָאֶחָד וְהִכּוּ וְהָיָה הַמַּחֲנֶה הַנִּשְׁאָר לְפָלִיטָה:

Yaakov was very fearful and he was very troubled and he divided the people that were with him and the cattle and the camels, in half, into two camps. Yaakov said, 'If Eisav will come against one of the camps and smite it, then the remaining camp will be saved.

Rashi writes:

התקין עצמו לשלשה דברים לדורון, לתפלה ולמלחמה.

Yaakov prepared in three ways: gifts, prayer and war.

¹⁸ We read (ibid. Perek 34/P'sukim 1-2):

וַתֵּצֵא דִינָה בַת לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָהּ לַיַּעֲקֹב לִרְאוֹת בְּבָנוֹת הָאֶרֶץ: וַיִּרְא אֶתָּה שָׁכֵם בֶּן חַמּוֹר הַחִוִּי נָשִׂיא הָאֶרֶץ וַיִּקַּח אֶתָּה וַיִּשְׁכַּב אִתָּה וַיַּעֲנֶה:

Dina the daughter of Leah who gave birth to her for Yaakov went out to see the girls of the land. Shechem ben Chamor the *Chivite*, the prince of the land, saw her and he took her and he lay with her and he afflicted her.

¹⁹ We read (ibid. Posuk 25):

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בְּהִיוֹתָם כְּאֲבִימִם וַיִּקְחוּ שְׁנֵי בְנֵי יַעֲקֹב שִׁמּוֹן וְלֵוִי אֶתִּי דִינָה אִישׁ חֶרְבוֹ וַיָּבֹאוּ עַל הָעִיר בְּטַח וַיַּהַרְגוּ כָּל זָכָר:

It was on the third day when they were in pain; two sons of Yaakov, Shimon and Levi the brothers of Dina, each man took a sword and they came upon the city securely and they killed all the males.

²⁰ We read (ibid. Posuk 30):

R is the first-born and it stands to reason that his father, who is Y's father as well, had great expectations from him. However, R has exhibited rash behavior at times²¹ and that has added to the already significant level of tension in the family.

Ye is the fourth brother, a full-brother to D, S, L and R. He seems to hold a leadership role in the family – his word is respected but it does not seem

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל שְׁמֵעוֹן וְאֶל לֵוִי עֲכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי לְהַבְאִישׁנִי בְיֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ בְּכַנְעֲנִי וּבְפְרָזִי: וְאֲנִי מֵתִי מִסָּפֵר וְנֶאֱסָפוּ עָלַי וְהִכּוּנִי וְנִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי:

Yaakov said to Shimon and Levi, 'You have sullied me to make me offensive against those who dwell in this land: the Canaanites and the Prizites; I am only a few people and they will all gather against me and they will smite me and I will be destroyed, me and my household.

We read (ibid. Perek 49/P'sukim 5-7):

שְׁמֵעוֹן וְלֵוִי אֲחִים כְּלֵי חַמְסֵי מִכְרֹתֵיהֶם: בְּסוֹדָם אֵל תֵּבֵא נַפְשֵׁי בְקִהְלָם אֵל תִּתְחַד כְּבֹדִי כִּי בְאַפָּם הִרְגוּ אִישׁ וּבְרָצֹנָם עָקְרוּ שׁוֹר: אֲרוּר אָפָם כִּי עָז וְעִבְרָתָם כִּי קִשְׁתָּהּ אֲחֻלְקֶם בְּיַעֲקֹב וְאֶפְיָצָם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

Shimon and Levi are brothers; instruments of violence are their birth nature. May my soul not come into their council, in their gathering, my honor – do not be one with them; because in their fury they killed a man and it was their will to uproot the ox. Their anger should be cursed because it is brazen; they anger is harsh; I will divided them among Yaakov and I will spread them out in Israel.

²¹ We read (ibid. Perek 35/Posuk 22):

וַיְהִי בְשֹׁנֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ הַהוּא וַיֵּלֶךְ רְאוּבֵן וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֶת בִּלְהָהּ פִּילְגֶשֶׁת אִבּוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי בְנֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנָיִם עָשָׂר:

It was when Israel lived in that land, Reuven went and he laid with Bilhoh the concubine of his father; Yisroel heard; the sons of Yaakov were twelve.

Rashi writes:

שבלבל משכבו

Reuven moved Yaakov's bed to the tent of *his* mother, Leah.

We know what Yaakov said about this incident as we read (B'reishis Perek 49/Posuk 4):

פָּחַז כַּמִּים אֵל תּוֹתֵר כִּי עֲלִיתָ מִשְׁכְּבֵי אָבִיךָ אֶז תַּלְלֵת יְצוּעֵי עֵלָה:

You are rash like water, you will not have extra because you went up on the beds of your father; you profaned upon the beds.

that he has contributed positively to lowering the sense of animosity in the family. He may have even aggravated the situation²².

Conclusion: Y should be watched carefully. A follow-up to this report should take place in a year's time.

II. Year (circa 2217)

As agreed at the first meeting a year ago regarding Y and his family, a follow-up review has taken place. The following are its results:

A follow-up regarding Y is no longer possible. It seems that he was the victim of a vicious animal attack and is no longer among the living²³. The committee sent its condolences to the family but the rejection of those

²² We read in our Parsha (Perek 37/P'sukim 18, 20, 26-27):

וַיִּרְאוּ אֹתוֹ מֵרְחוֹק וּבִטְרָם יִקְרַב אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְנַכְלוּ אֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ:
וְעַתָּה לָכֵן וְנִהְרָגְהוּ וְנִשְׁלַכְהוּ בְּאֶחָד הַבְּרוֹת וְאָמַרְנוּ חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלְתָּהוּ וְנִרְאָה מִה יִהְיֶה חֲלֻמְתָיו:
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל אֶתְיוּ מִה בְּצַע כִּי נִהְרַג אֶת אַחִינוּ וְנִכְסֵינוּ אֶת דָּמֹ: לָכֵן וְנִמְכְּרֵנוּ לַיִּשְׁמַעֵאלִים וְנִדְבֹנוּ
אֶל תְּהִי בּוֹ כִּי אַחִינוּ בְּשָׂרֵנוּ הוּא וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶתְיוּ:

His brothers saw Yosef from afar and before he approached them they plotted about him to kill him.

Now, let us go and kill him and we will cast him into one of the pits and we will say, 'a wild animal devoured him; then we will see what his dreams will be'.

Yehuda said to his brothers, 'What worth is there if we kill our brother and spill his blood. Let us go and sell him to the Ishmaelites; let our hands not be against him because he is our brother, he is our flesh;' his brothers listened to him.

²³ We read (ibid. P'sukim 32-33):

וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת כְּתֹנֶת הַפְּסִים וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל אָבִיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֹאת מִצְאָנוּ הִכָּר נָא הַכְּתֹנֶת בִּנְךָ הוּא אִם לֹא:
וַיִּכְיֶרָה וַיֹּאמֶר כְּתֹנֶת בְּנֵי חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלְתָּהוּ טָרֵף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף:

The brothers sent the shirt with silk and they brought to their father and they said, 'We found this; recognize this, please. Is this the shirt of your son or not?' He recognized it and he said, 'This is the shirt of my son; a wild animal devoured him; Yosef has surely been torn apart by a wild animal.'

condolences on the part of Y's father and grandfather²⁴ encouraged the committee to continue to investigate the holistic family situation.

Thus, the committee was empowered to examine the ongoing family dynamics.

D – There is no additional information – although there are rumors that she has married properly²⁵.

R – There is vague information that he showed unique concern for Y in a stressful situation but our efforts to clear away the haze that surrounds such an event have not been successful.

Ye – For reasons undetermined, Ye has been ostracized by his siblings, full-siblings and half-siblings, and has moved out of the clan's domicile. Surprisingly, because Ye's family keeps themselves very separate from the communal and social affairs of the general citizenry, Ye has befriended a distinguished Canaanite citizen and has taken a wife²⁶.

²⁴ We read (ibid. P'sukim 34-35):

וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שְׂמֵלֹתָיו וַיִּשָּׂם שָׂק בְּמַתְנָיו וַיִּתְאַבֵּל עַל בְּנָו יָמִים רַבִּים: וַיִּקְמוּ כָל בְּנָיו וְכָל בָּנֹתָיו לִנְחָמוֹ
וַיִּמְאֵן לְהִתְנַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶרְדּוּ אֵל בְּנֵי אֲבִל שְׂאֵלָה וַיִּבְרַךְ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו:

Yaakov rent his garments and he placed sackcloth on his loins and he mourned for his sons many days. All of Yaakov's sons and daughters arose to comfort him and he refused to be comforted; he said, I will go down to the grave as a mourner for my son; his father cried for him.

Rashi writes:

ויברך אתו אביו - יצחק היה בוכה מפני צרתו של יעקב:

His father cried for him – Yitzchak cried because of the sorrow of Yaakov.

²⁵ See Rashi to B'reishis Perek 46/Posuk 10.

²⁶ We read in our Parsha (Perek 38/P'sukim 1-2):

וַיְהִי בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֶת אָחָיו וַיֵּט עַד אִישׁ עַדְלָמִי וּשְׁמוֹ חִירָה: וַיֵּרָא שָׁם יְהוּדָה בֵּת אִישׁ
כְּנַעֲנִי וּשְׁמוֹ שׁוּעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵלָיָהּ:

It was at that time that Yehuda went down from his brothers and he turned to an *Adulamite* man and his name was Chirah. Yehuda saw there the daughter of a Canaanite man and his name was *Shu'a* and he married her and he lived with her.

Conclusion: It does not seem that the committee should expend its valuable time with this family. It was decided to close the case due to the absence of the prime subject, Y.

III. Year (circa) 2238

(Note: A veteran committee member remembered this case which has figured prominently in contemporary events and found the original file. It was decided to open the file and to add on to it for future reference and academic evaluation of the committee's functioning.)

As is well-known, life here in Canaan has been in a crisis mode for the last two years because of a severe famine that has left all of the inhabitants of the land starving²⁷. Caravans have been traveling back and forth to Egypt to replenish food-stocks and the high cost of food obtainable from Egypt has greatly depleted the financial basis of the entire country.

Economists differ regarding the role that the Canaanite government played in exacerbating the situation. Opposition economists complain of poor planning whereas government economists claim that appropriate measures were undertaken to have ample supplies of produce on hand, but climate change introduced factors that could not have been taken into account.

It is in this context that we have heard that in the last weeks, Y has been located. He did not die and, in fact, is sound and well, to say the least. Most surprisingly, Y occupies a royal position in the household of the

²⁷ We read in next week's Parshas Miketz (ibid. Perek41/P'sukim 53-54):

וְתִקְלִינָה שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִי הַשְּׁבַע אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וְתִחְלִינָה שִׁבְעַת שָׁנֵי הָרָעָב לְבוֹא כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר יוֹסֵף
וַיְהִי רָעָב בְּכָל הָאֲרָצוֹת וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הָיָה לֶחֶם:

The seven years of plenty that were in the Land of Egypt concluded. The seven years of famine began to come as Yosef said and there was a famine in all of the lands and in the Land of Egypt there was bread.

Egyptian palace²⁸. This is despite him being of Hebrew descent²⁹ with the customs of the Hebrews being repugnant to Egyptian sensibilities³⁰.

At this time, there is insufficient information regarding Y to close the file. Our committee has noted that the events, complicated and dynamic are perhaps the most fascinating that they have witnessed.

At this point we are closing the inquiry because the youth who interested us is now an adult and is far removed from our jurisdiction.

²⁸ We read *ibid.* Perek 41/P'sukim 40-43):

אתה תהיה על ביתי ועל פירך ישק כל עמי רק הכסא אגדל ממך: ויאמר פרעה אל יוסף ראה נתתי אתך על כל ארץ מצרים: ויסר פרעה את טבעתו מעל ידו ויתן אותה על יד יוסף וילבש אתו בגדי שש וישם רבד הזהב על צנארו: וירכב אתו במרכבת המשנה אשר לו ויקראו לפניו אברך ונתון אתו על כל ארץ מצרים:

Par'o said to Yosef, 'You will be in charge of my house and according to your mouth all my people will conduct their business; only my throne will I aggrandize more than you.' Par'o said to Yosef, 'See, I have placed you above the entire Land of Egypt.' Par'o removed his ring from upon his hand and he gave it upon Yosef's hand and he dressed Yosef in linen clothes and placed a golden chain upon his neck. He gave him to ride in the chariot of the viceroy that he had and they proclaimed before Yosef - 'avrech'; he was placed over the entire Land of Egypt.

²⁹ We read the (B'reishis Perek 41/Posuk 12) insulting words of *Sar HaMashkim* for which he wasn't rebuked:

ושם אתנו נער עברי עבד לשר הטבחים ונספך לו ויפתר לנו את חלמתינו איש כחלמו פתרו: There with us was a Hebrew lad, a slave to the *Sar HaTabachim*; we told him and he solved our dreams for us; each like his dream he interpreted.

Rashi explains there that the term *ivri* was meant to be demeaning as well as indicating that a *Hebrew* would not be a threat to the throne.

³⁰ We read (*ibid.* Perek 43/Posuk 32):

וישימו לו לבדו ולהם לבדם ולמצרים האכלים אתו לבדם כי לא יוכלון המצרים לאכל את העברים לחם כי תועבה הוא למצרים:

They placed the food for Yosef by himself and for the brothers by themselves and for the Egyptians who were eating with them, by themselves, because the Egyptians were unable to eat bread with the Hebrews because that was an abomination for Egypt.

Nothing has been heard regarding the individual brothers with the exception of Ye who, after his wife's death, seems to have been involved in a mini-scandal³¹. When we inquired, family members were not talking.

So now our little charade is over. No one was misled by it because we all know the events well.

On the other hand, it may be very worthwhile to try to have a picture of what our understanding would have been had we not already learned these Parshos of Yosef, had we not learned the commentaries of Rashi and others and had not organized our thinking around the *masorah* that guides us.

So we pretended. We pretended to write a report, similar to those that are written daily about the people that we know.

Perhaps we are the writers of such reports. Perhaps we are the subjects of such reports. And perhaps we are both the writers and the subjects.

We did not bring in any 'outside' sources. The sources were P'sukim and Rashi and the picture was not as pretty as we wished it to be.

But, I don't think that such is the issue. I think that the issue is what we do with such information, what conclusions we reach, what guidance we give.

In order to test ourselves regarding the guidance and direction that we offer and the conclusions that we reach, let us stop pretending for the next minutes and have a review of what in fact occurred as we look back over three millennia ago and look what occurred to the central figures that were discussed.

Reuven was rash and impulsive. But that did not prevent him from acting heroically, saving the life of Yosef.

We read in our Parsha (Perek 37/P'sukim 21-22):

³¹ We read (B'reishis Perek 38/Posuk 23):

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה תִּקַּח לָהּ פֶּן נִהְיֶה לְבוֹז הַנְּהַל שְׁלַחְתִּי הַגְּדִי הַזֶּה וְאַתָּה לֹא מִצְאָתָהּ:
Yehuda said, 'Take [the payment] for her lest we become disgraced; behold, I sent this kid and you did not find her.'

וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלֵהוּ מִיָּדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִכְנֹוּ נַפְשׁוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם רְאוּבֵן אַל תִּשְׁפְּכוּ דָם הַשְּׁלִיכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל הַבּוֹר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיָּד אַל תִּשְׁלַחוּ בּוֹ לְמַעַן הִצִּיל אֹתוֹ מִיָּדָם לְהָשִׁיבוֹ אֶל אָבִיו:

Reuven heard and he saved Yosef from their hand and he said, 'Let us not fatally smite him.' Reuven said to them, 'do not spill blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, do not extend a hand against him'; [he did this] in order to save Yosef from their hand, to return him to his father.

Reuven was a person of unusual character. His name prophesied that greatness.

Rashi interprets the name רְאוּבֵן, which literally means 'see the son'. He writes (B'reishis Perek 29/Posuk 32):

ותקרא שמו ראובן - רבותינו פירשו, אמרה ראו מה בין בני לבן חמי שמכר הבכורה ליעקב, וזה לא מכרה ליוסף ולא ערער עליו, ולא עוד שלא ערער עליו אלא שביקש להוציאו מן הבור:

She called his name Reuven – Our Rabbis explained that Leah said, 'See the difference between my son and the son of my father-in-law [Yitzchak], Eisav. Eisav sold the birthright to Yaakov [and then he challenged it]. My son did not sell it to Yosef [it was just given to Yosef]; and he did not challenge it. Not only did he not challenge it, he sought to take Yosef out from the pit.

Of course the birthright that Yaakov gave to Yosef was that he had the double portion of *shevotim*. Yosef became two tribes, not Reuven. That is what we read in Parshas Vayechi (B'reishis Perek 48/Posuk 5):

וְעַתָּה שְׁנֵי בְנֵיךְ הַנּוֹלָדִים לְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד בָּאִי אֵלַיךָ מִצְרַיִמָּה לִי הֵם אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כְּרְאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ לִי:

Now your two sons who were born in the Land of Egypt until I came to you, they are mine; Ephraim and Menashe will be mine like Reuven and Shimon.

We also remember the distraught reaction of Reuven when discovering Yosef's disappearance as we read (Perek 37/P'sukim 29-30):

וַיֵּשֶׁב רְאוּבֵן אֶל הַבּוֹר וְהִנֵּה אֵין יוֹסֵף בַּבּוֹר וַיִּקְרַע אֶת בְּגָדָיו: וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶל אָחִיו וַיֹּאמֶר הִילָד אֵינְנוּ וְאֲנִי אֲנִה אֲנִי בָּא:

Reuven returned to the pit and behold Yosef was not in the pit; Reuven rent his garments. Reuven returned to his brothers and he said, 'the boy is not there. To where am I coming?'

And Rashi tells us that Reuven regretted his impulsiveness as we read in these verses:

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

Reuven returned – He was involved with his sackcloth and his fasting because he mixed the beds of his father.

What about Shimon and Levi? Yaakov Ovinu reflected upon them at his death, bringing up the events in Shechem. We read (ibid. Posuk 4):

שמעון ולוי אחים כלי חמס מכרתיהם:

Shimon and Levi are brothers; instruments of violence are their birth nature.

And yet, we read in Yalkut Shimoni (B'reishis Parshas Vayechi 158):

אין לנו סופרים ומלמדי תינוקות אלא משמעון

Our scribes and teachers of children only come from Shevet Shimon³².

Who needs to be more trustworthy than the *Sofer*? He writes in the privacy of his home. If he did not have the proper *kavana* when he writes the Name of G-d, who would know? If he is writing Tefillin and goes back to correct an earlier mistake, something which is not allowed, who could discover it?

The Sifrei Torah which we read and the Tefillin that we don testify to the integrity of Shimon!

And who do we depend upon more for the education and guidance for our children than מלמדי דרדקים, those who teach the little ones? That was the Shimon about whom harsh words were said and about whom the future did not look bright at all. Shimon was not a 'lost cause' whatsoever.

And what about Levi? Levi was grandfather of Moshe Rabbenu and Aharon HaKohen HaGodol. All the Kohanim are Levi'im.

³² See there as to the reason that Divine Providence guided them in that direction.

One who brings a Korbon depends completely on the Kohen who makes the offering. Not only do his actions have to be perfectly correct and beyond reproach, but his intent, more or less, has to be perfect. If for a moment the Kohen thought to do the required activities in a different time or place, the Korbon was disqualified – and who would know?

But, even more than that. Shevet Levi presents us with a profile worthy of emulation. This is what Rambam writes at the very end of Hilchos Shemitta v'Yovel (Perek 13/Halachos 12-13):

ולמה לא זכה לוי בנחלת ארץ ישראל ובביזתה עם אחיו מפני שהובדל לעבוד את ה'
לשרתו ולהורות דרכיו הישרים ומשפטיו הצדיקים לרבים...לפיכך הובדלו מדרכי
העולם...

ולא שבט לוי בלבד אלא כל איש ואיש מכל באי העולם אשר נדבה רוחו אותו והבינו
מדעו להבדל לעמוד לפני ה' לשרתו ולעובדו לדעה את ה'...זה נתקדש קדש קדשים
ויהיה ה' חלקו ונחלתו לעולם ולעולמי עולמים ...

Why didn't Shevet Levi merit an inheritance in Eretz Yisroel and in its spoils together with his brethren? It is because Shevet Levi was designated to worship Hashem and to serve Him and to teach His straight ways and His righteous laws to the masses. Therefore, Shevet Levi was separated from the ways of the world.

And not Shevet Levi alone, but every person from all those in the world whose spirit moves him and he understands the knowledge to be separate and to stand before Hashem and to serve Him and to worship Him to know G-d. This person has become sanctified as the holy of holies and Hashem will be his portion and inheritance forever and ever.

Are we ashamed of the extraordinary achievements of Levi's descendants?

And Yehuda? Yehuda showed bravery at least three times and it is up to the reader to decide which moment was greater. First, he demonstrated greatness when he could have kept silent and hidden his relationship with Tamar. But he didn't keep silent. We read in our Parshas Vayeshev (Perek 38/Posuk 26):

וַיִּכַּר יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר צְדִיקָה מִמֶּנִּי כִּי עַל כֵּן לֹא נִתְּתִיהָ לְשֵׁלָה בְּנִי וְלֹא יִסַּף עוֹד לְדַעְתָּהּ:

Yehuda recognized and he said, 'She is more righteous than me because I did not give her to my son, Sheloh'; he did not cease anymore from living with her.

And, in next week's Parshas Miketz we read (Perek 43/P'sukim 8-9):

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבִיו שְׁלַחְהָ הַנֶּעַר אִתִּי וְנִקְוָמָה וְנִלְכָה וְנַחֲיָה וְלֹא נָמוּת גַּם אֲנַחְנוּ גַם אַתָּה גַם טַפְנוּ: אֲנֹכִי אֶעְרְבֶנּוּ מִיָּדִי תִבְקֶשְׁנוּ אִם לֹא הִבִּיאֲתִיו אֵלֶיךָ וְהִצַּגְתִּיו לְפָנֶיךָ וְחָטָאתִי לָךְ כָּל הַיָּמִים:

Yehuda said to Yisroel his father, 'Send the lad with me and we will arise and we will go and we will live and we will not die, also us, also you and also our children. I will guarantee him, from my hand you will demand him; if I do not bring him to you and present him before you, I will be sinning to you for all the days.

And, finally in Parshas Vayigash we learn (Perek 44/Posuk 18):

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אָדֹנָי יְדַבֵּר נָא עִבְדְּךָ דְבַר בְּאָזְנֵי אָדֹנָי וְאֵל יַחַר אַפְךָ בְּעַבְדְּךָ כִּי כִמוֹךָ כִּפְרַעְהָ:

Yehuda approached Tzofnas Panei'ach and he said, 'Please my master, let your servant speak a word in the ears of my master and do not be angry with your servant because you are like Par'o.

Rashi writes:

ואל יחר אפך - מכאן אתה למד שדבר אליו קשות:

Do not be angry – from here you learn that Yehuda spoke harshly to Tzofnas Panei'ach.

כי כמוך כפרעה -...סופך ללקות עליו בצרעת כמו שלקה פרעה על ידי זקנתי שרה על לילה אחת שעכבה. דבר אחר מה פרעה גוזר ואינו מקיים, מבטיח ואינו עושה, אף אתה כן...דבר אחר כי כמוך כפרעה אם תקניטני אהרוג אותך ואת אדוניך:

You are like Par'o – at the end you will be struck with leprosy in the same way that Par'o was struck for keeping my grandmother Sarah [for only] one night. Another explanation is that Yehuda was saying, 'Just like Par'o made decrees and was unable to fulfil them, promised and was unable to fulfil

them, you are the same.’ Another explanation of ‘you are like Par’o’- ‘If you anger me, I will kill you and your master.’

Yehuda continued (ibid. P’sukim 32-23):

כִּי עֲבַדְךָ עָרַב אֶת הַנֶּעֱר מֵעַם אָבִי לֵאמֹר אִם לֹא אָבִיאֲנֹו אֵלֶיךָ וְחָטַאתִי לְאָבִי כָּל הַיָּמִים:
וְעַתָּה יֵשֶׁב נָא עֲבַדְךָ תַּחַת הַנֶּעֱר עֶבֶד לְאֲדֹנָי וְהַנֶּעֱר יַעַל עִם אָחָיו:

Because your servant guaranteed the lad from my father saying, ‘If I do not bring him to you, I will have sinned to my father all the days. Now, please let your servant sit [in captivity] in place of the lad as a servant for my master and let the lad ascend to his father with his brothers.

And this courageous person was awarded the kingship over Israel for all generations. That is what his father said to him (ibid. Perek 49/Posuk 10):

לֹא יִסּוֹר שֵׁבֶט מִיְהוּדָה וּמַחֲקֶק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי יָבֹא שִׁילֹו וְלוֹ יִקְרָת עַמִּים:

The sceptre shall not depart from Yehuda and the ruling of law from between his legs until he comes to *Shilo* and to him the nations will gather.

Yehuda was truly majestic.

However, our overview cannot be complete without carefully examining Yosef, who as a lad had many faults.

Here, we will not go into detail about Yosef who became a successful leader in the House of Potifar and then in the jail and then under Par’o. We will not even discuss how he was gentle and caring to his brothers and did not undertake any act of revenge³³.

³³ We read Yosef’s words when he revealed himself to his brothers (B’reishis Perek 45/P’sukim 5, 8):

וְעַתָּה אֵל תַּעֲצֹבוּ וְאַל יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הִנֵּה כִּי לְמַחְיָה שָׁלַחַנִּי אֶ...לְקִים לְפָנֵיכֶם:
וְעַתָּה לֹא אַתֶּם שָׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הִנֵּה כִּי הֵאָ...לְקִים וַיְשִׁימֵנִי לְאָב לְפָרְעָה וּלְאֲדֹן לְקַל בֵּיתוֹ וּמַשְׁלַל בְּכָל
אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

Now, do not be sad and you shall not have anger in your eyes because you sold me to here; Hashem G-d sent me before you to bring you life. Now, you did not send me here; it was G-d and he placed me as a patron of Par’o and as a master over all of his entire household and a ruler in all of the Land of Egypt.

We will discuss one event – Yosef's encounter with the wife of Potifar.

The Torah tells us that in some ways, Yosef's behavior was no different in the House of Potifar than it was years earlier in his father's house.

We read in our Parsha (Perek 39/P'sukim 6-7):

וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ בְּיַד יוֹסֵף וְלֹא יָדַע אֶתֹּ מְאוּמָה כִּי אִם הִלָּחֵם אֲשֶׁר הוּא אוֹכֵל וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יָפֵה תָאֵר וַיִּפֶּה מְרָאָה: וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּשָּׂא אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶת עֵינֶיהָ אֶל יוֹסֵף וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁכְבָה עִמִּי:

Potifar left all that he had in the hand of Yosef and he knew nothing with what Yosef did, except for the bread that he would eat; Yosef was good looking and had a pleasing appearance. It was after these things that the wife of his master raised her eyes to Yosef and she said, 'lay with me'.

Rashi writes:

וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יָפֵה תָאֵר - כִּיֹּן שְׂרָאָה עֲצָמוֹ מוֹשֵׁל, הַתְּחִיל אוֹכֵל וְשׂוֹתָהּ וּמְסַלֵּסל בְּשַׁעֲרוֹ, אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֲבִיךָ מִתְּאָבֵל וְאַתָּה מְסַלֵּסל בְּשַׁעֲרֶךָ, אֲנִי מִגְרָה בֶּךָ אֶת הַדּוֹב, מִיָּד וַתִּשָּׂא אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶת עֵינֶיהָ:

Yosef was good looking and had a pleasing appearance – When he saw himself ruling, he began to eat and drink and make his hair look nice. Hashem said, 'Your father is mourning and you are making your hair look nice? I am going to incite the bear against you.' Immediately - 'The wife of his master raised her eyes'.

What prevented Yosef from sinning? We read the words of Rashi (Posuk 11):

וַחֲדָא אָמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת צְרָכֵי עֵמָה אֲלֵא שְׁנֵרָאִית לֹא דְמוֹת דְּיוֹקְנֵי שְׁלֵא אֲבִי

We read Yosef's words to his brothers following the death of Yaakov (ibid. Perek 50/Posuk 19-21):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף אֵל תִּירָאוּ כִּי הִתַּחַת אֲנִי לִיקִים אֲנִי: וְאַתֶּם תִּשְׁבַּתֶּם עָלַי הֲעָה אֲנִי... לִיקִים תִּשְׁבַּה לְטִבָּה לְמַעַן עֲשֶׂה כִּיֹּם הַזֶּה לְהַחֲיִית עִם רַב: וְעַתָּה אֵל תִּירָאוּ אֲנִי אֲכַלְכֵּל אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת טַפְכֶם וַיְנַחֵם אוֹתָם וַיְדַבֵּר עַל לִבָּם:

Yosef said to his brothers, "Do not fear because— am I in place of G-d? You thought to do evil to me and Hashem thought it to be good in order to do this day to give life to a large public. Now do not fear; I will support you and your children' and he comforted them and he spoke to their hearts.

One opinion says that Yosef came to the house to be with Potifar's wife but he stopped because the image of his father appeared to him.

Isn't it amazing? Undoubtedly, the vision of Yaakov Ovinu was uniquely holy. As we have noted elsewhere, the *Ovos* were the 'Chariot of the Shechinah'. And now that Yosef was deliberately making his way to commit a grave sin, would we not have expected that the holy visage of his father would distance itself from him completely, severing his relationship with him?

But such was not the case. Not only did the holy visage of Yaakov Ovinu not distance itself from him – but it appeared before him to strengthen him and to allow him the freedom of choice to desist from his planned action and from the desires that were overwhelming him³⁴.

And this, I believe is the key for understanding our potential for misunderstanding and our potential for reaching conclusions that are not necessarily justified.

We can venture to say that this visage that appeared to Yosef was not a potential that was Yosef's alone. This visage is an expression of the *pintele Yid*, the neshama that is within each and every Jew. For some the *pintele* – smallness - may be infinitesimal. For others, it may loom larger. That is what it is in everyday life.

But in times of threat, it can be visible even if it is most *pintele*. Because, this spark of sanctity is a reflection of an embodiment of the fact that we all possess חלק ממעל א...ל'ק, a portion of G-d, as it were.

And it is for that reason that no matter how accurate our assessment was and no matter how on-target our view and understanding was, and is, of an individual at a certain point in his life, we cannot determine what his future will be³⁵. We have no right to condemn anyone.

³⁴ See Rashi to B'reishis Perek 49/Posuk 24.

³⁵ The one exception to this rule as far as I know, that a person's profile today determines what he will be in the future, is the case of בן סורר ומורה, the 'rebellious son' about whom it says in the Mishnah (Masseches Sanhedrin Perek 8/Mishnah 5) נידון על שם סופו – he is judged now about what he will be later. The Torah testifies that a person who does the acts of which this rebellious son is guilty will end up being a murderer.

We must not 'write off' anyone. The door must not be shut because the ability of an individual to sense his own sanctity does not abandon us. And, of course, our ability to sense the sanctity of others is quite limited, if it exists at all.

This is true of 'everyman' of Am Yisroel. It does not apply to the Patriarchs and to the Shevotim alone; it applies to all of us.

And therefore we have reached a conclusion. Even if our summary of those mentioned in the 'report' was correct at that time, that does not mean that those involved were doomed to live their entire life in such a shadow³⁶. Their *pintele Yid* was vibrant and every one of them felt it.

And what does that teach us as we approach *Chanukah* and we celebrate the heroism of the few who emulated Avraham Ovinu and stood up against the many who erred terribly?

The lesson is clear. We do not have to be less than them. We can be their equals or even greater. If our motivation is strong, then the *pintele Yid* can make it stronger. If our motivation is dormant then the *pintele Yid* will seek to arouse that motivation.

The alarm is sounding. We must not ignore it!

Shabbat Shalom

Chanukah Sameach

Rabbi Pollock

There is also a different case based on a specific action, but not on a personality profile, when we deem a person as being irredeemable at that particular moment.

Such is the case of *הבא במחתרת*, a robber breaking into a house. We read about him (ibid. Mishnah 6) as well that he, too, is *נידון על שם סופו*. However, after the break-in, when he is no longer engaged in criminal activity, he may not be killed.

³⁶ We read Mishneh Torah LaRambam Hilchos Teshuva Perek 2/Halachah 4):

מדרכי התשובה...משנה שמו כלומר אני אחר ואיני אותו האיש שעשה אותן המעשים:

Among the ways of repentance is for the penitent to change his as to say, 'I am someone else; I am not the same person who sinned and who did those actions.'

