

# Yosef's Teshuva

Source 1a): Opening of Vayeshev

- א וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב, בְּאֶרֶץ מִגְוָרֵי אָבִיו--בְּאֶרֶץ, כְּנָעַן. 1 And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.
- ב אֵלֶּה תִּלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף בֶּן-שֶׁבַע-עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת-אֶחָיו בְּצֹאן, וְהוּא נֶעַר אֶת-בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת-בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה, נָשֵׁי אָבִיו ; וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת-דְּבָרָם רָעָה, אֶל-אָבִיהֶם. 2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, being still a lad even with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; **and Joseph brought evil report of them unto their father.**

## 1b) Rashi

את דבתם רעה - כל רעה שהיה רואה באחיו בני לאה היה מגיד לאביו שהיו אוכלין אבר מן החי ומזלזלין בבני השפחות לקרותן עבדים וחשודים על העריות ובשלשתן לקה. על אבר מן החי וישחטו שעיר עזים במכירתו ולא אכלוהו חי כדי שילקה בשחיטה ועל דבה שספר עליהם שקורין לאחיהם עבדים לעבד נמכר יוסף. ועל העריות שספר עליהם ותשא אשת אדוניו וגו':

"Any evil that he perceived in his brothers, the sons of Leah, he would report to his father: that they would eat a limb from a living animal, that they would scorn the children of the handmaidens, calling them 'slaves,' and that he suspected them of immoral relations. For all three he was punished: for his accusation of eating the limb of a live animal – 'And they slaughtered a goat...' after his sale; they did not eat its flesh while it was alive. For telling his father that they called their brothers 'slaves' - 'Yosef was sold as a slave.' And for the immorality of which he accused them – 'And his master's wife cast her eyes upon Yosef.'"

## Source 2a) Yosef's Dreams

- ה וַיַּחְלֵם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם, וַיַּגִּד לְאֶחָיו ; וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד, שֶׁנָּא אֹתוֹ. 5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren; and they hated him yet the more.
- ו וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲלֵיהֶם : שְׁמְעוּ-נָא, הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלַמְתִּי. 6 And he said unto them: 'Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:
- ז וְהִנֵּה אֲנַחְנוּ מְאַלְמִים אֲלֵמִים, בְּתוֹךְ הַשָּׂדֶה, וְהִנֵּה קָמָה אֲלַמְתִּי, וְגַם-נִצְבָּה; וְהִנֵּה תִסְבִּינָה אֲלַמְתֵיכֶם, וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶינּוּ לְאַלְמְתִּי. 7 for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and bowed down to my sheaf.'
- ח וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ, אֶחָיו, הַמֶּלֶךְ תִּמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ, אִם-מְשׁוֹל תִּמְשָׁל בָּנוּ ; וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד שֶׁנָּא אֹתוֹ, עַל-חֲלֻמֹתָיו וְעַל-דְּבָרָיו. 8 And his brethren said to him: 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?' And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

## What's missing from this picture?

One more aspect of the dreams :

וַיֹּסְפוּ עוֹד שֶׁנָּא אֹתוֹ, עַל-חֲלֻמֹתָיו וְעַל-דְּבָרָיו.

And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

2b) Ramban:

וטעם על חלומותיו ועל דבריו - שהיו שונאים אותו על החלומות, וגם על הסיפור שהוא מספר אותו להם כמתהלל, כמו שאמר "שמעו נא החלום הזה אשר חלמתי"

"They hated him for his dreams, but also for the conceited way in which he recounted them."

*Sources 3) Yosef's process of change:*

ח) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו חֲלוֹם חֲלַמְנוּ וּפְתָר אֵין אֵתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף חֲלוֹם  
לֵאלֹהִים פְּתֻרָנִים סִפְרוּ נָא לִי:

**"Do solutions not belong to God? Please, tell me" (40:8)**

טז) וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר בְּלִעְדֵי אֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה

**More specifically, he declares before Pharaoh: "It is not me; God will restore Pharaoh's peace of mind" (41:16)**

כה) וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל פַּרְעֹה חֲלוֹם פַּרְעֹה אֶחָד הוּא אֵת אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׂה  
הַגִּיד לְפַרְעֹה

**"What God is going to do He has told to Pharaoh" ( verse 25)**

לב) וְעַל הַשְּׁנוֹת הַחֲלוֹם אֶל פַּרְעֹה פְּעַמִּים כִּי נִכּוֹן הַדְּבָר מֵעַם הָאֱלֹהִים  
וּמִמֶּהָר הָאֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ

**"For the thing has been determined by God, and God will hasten to perform it" (verse 32)**

ח) וְעַתָּה לֹא אַתֶּם שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הִנֵּה כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים וַיְשִׁימֵנִי לְאָב לְפַרְעֹה  
וּלְאֲדוֹן לְכָל בֵּיתוֹ וּמִשָּׁל בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

**"So now, it is not you who sent me here but rather God, and He made me a father to Pharaoh and master of all his household, and ruler of all of the land of Egypt" (45:8)**

כ) וְאַתֶּם חֲשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֱלֹהִים חֲשַׁבָה לְטֹבָה לְמַעַן עֲשֶׂה כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה  
לְהַחֲיֵת עַם רַב:

**"God worked it out for the good, in order to arrange things such at this time that many people should be saved" (50:20).**

Source 4a): Bereshit Ch. 47 – Yosef deals with Egypt's Fiscal Cliff

יד) וַיִּלְקֹט יוֹסֵף אֶת כָּל הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בְּשֹׁבֵר אֲשֶׁר הֵם שֹׁבְרִים וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת הַכֶּסֶף בֵּיתָה פְּרָעָה : טו) וַיִּתֵּם הַכֶּסֶף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּמֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל מִצְרַיִם אֶל יוֹסֵף לֵאמֹר הִבָּה לָנוּ לֶחֶם וְלָמָּה נָמוּת נִגְדָּד כִּי אֵפֶס כֶּסֶף : טז) וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף הֲבוּ מִקְנֵיכֶם וְאֶתְנֶנָּה לָכֶם בְּמִקְנֵיכֶם אִם אֵפֶס כֶּסֶף : יז) וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת מִקְנֵיהֶם אֶל יוֹסֵף וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם יוֹסֵף לֶחֶם בְּסוּסִים וּבְמִקְנֵי הַצֹּאן וּבְמִקְנֵי הַבְּקָר וּבְחֹמְרִים וַיִּנְהַלֵּם בְּלֶחֶם בְּכָל מִקְנֵיהֶם בַּשָּׁנָה הַהוּא:

"And Yosef gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought, and Yosef brought the money to Pharaoh's house. And the money ran out in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, and all of Egypt came to Yosef saying, 'Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence – for the money is gone.'

Yosef said, 'Bring your cattle, and I shall give you in exchange for your cattle, if there is no money.'

They brought their cattle to Yosef, and Yosef gave them bread in exchange for their horses and their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock for that year."

And...

יח) וַתִּתֵּם הַשָּׁנָה הַהוּא וַיָּבֵאוּ אֵלָיו בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ לֹא נִכְחַד מֵאֲדָנִי כִּי אִם תֵּם הַכֶּסֶף וּמִקְנֵי הַבְּהֵמָה אֶל אֲדָנִי לֹא נִשְׂאָר לִפְנֵי אֲדָנִי בְּלִתֵּי אִם גּוֹיֵתָנוּ וְאֲדָמָתָנוּ:

יט) לָמָּה נָמוּת לְעֵינֶיךָ גַּם אֲנַחְנוּ גַּם אֲדָמָתָנוּ קָנָה אֲתָנוּ וְאֶת אֲדָמָתָנוּ בְּלֶחֶם וְנַחֲיָה אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲדָמָתָנוּ עֲבָדִים לְפְרָעָה וְתֵן זֶרַע וְנַחֲיָה וְלֹא נָמוּת וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִשָּׁם

"We cannot hide from my lord that the money is finished, and the livestock has been given to my lord; we remain before my lord with nothing but our bodies and our land. Why shall we die before you, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh, and give seed that we may live and not die, and that the land will not be desolate"

Yosef's response? 4b) Rashi:

כא) ואת העם העביר - יוסף מעיר לעיר לזכרון שאין להם עוד חלק בארץ והושיב של עיר זו בחברתה

"Yosef purchased all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for the Egyptians sold each his field, for the famine prevailed over them, and so the land became Pharaoh's. As for the people, he moved them to the cities, from one end of the border of Egypt to the other."

### Strange Reversal?

כג) ויאמר יוסף אל העם הן קניתי אתכם היום ואת אדמתכם לפרעה הא לכם זרע וזרעתם את האדמה: כד) והיה בתבואת ונתתם חמישית לפרעה וארבע הידת יהיה לכם לזרע השדה ולאכלכם ולאשר בבתיכם ולאכל לטפכם:

"Yosef said to the people: Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh; here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. At the harvest times you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own for seed of the field, and for your food, and for the needs of your households, and to feed your children."

### Source 5: Rav Amnon Bazak

*It seems possible to suggest that **Yosef indeed retracted his original intention**. At first he may have found it impossible to free himself from the compelling sense of the power that he commanded – absolute control over all the property of Egypt. But, upon reflection, Yosef understood that power is not necessarily positive, and sometimes great wealth may cause its owner great harm. One day, the seven years of famine will end. Will the years of servitude and humiliation that the Egyptians have suffered not give rise to deeply-felt grievances that may erupt into real rebellion? **Hence, Yosef reconsiders his plan and proposes an economic proposal more favorable than anything they could have dreamed of, and at which they rejoice: "They said, 'You have saved us; let us find favor in my lord's eyes, and we shall be servants to Pharaoh"** (ibid. 25). Again the Egyptians offer themselves as slaves to Pharaoh, but what a great difference in attitude! When they first approached Yosef, their declaration was rooted in unbearable torment and a complete lack of alternative, while now they repeat it with profound gratitude.*

### Source 6: Ramban

יד) וילקט יוסף את כל הכסף וגו' סיפר הכתוב זה וגמר הענין בכל הפרשה להודיע מעלות יוסף בחכמה בתבונה ובדעת, וכי היה איש אמונים שהביא כל הכסף בית פרעה, ולא עשה לעצמו אוצרות כסף ומטמוני מסתרים בארץ מצרים או לשלחו לארץ כנען, אבל נתן למלך הבוטח בו כל הכסף וקנה לו את האדמה גם הגופות, ומצא בזה חן גם כן בעיני העם כי השם הוא המצליח את יראיו:

*"The point of the text recounting this, and of the whole story, is to teach us of Yosef's great wisdom, understanding and knowledge. He was a man of integrity who brought all the money to the house of Pharaoh, not making himself treasures and hidden treasuries in Egypt or sending it to the land of Canaan. Rather, he gave all the money to the king who trusted him, purchasing for him also the land and the people, thereby finding favor also in the eyes of the people, for God brings success to those who fear Him."*

### Source 7 – Bereishit Ch. 50 Following Yaakov's burial:

טו) ויראו אחי יוסף כי מת אביהם ויאמרו לו ישטמנו יוסף והשב ישיב לנו את כל הרעה אשר גמלנו אתו: טז) ויצונו אל יוסף לאמר אביך צנה לפני מותו לאמר: יז) כה תאמרו ליוסף אנא שאל נא פשע אחיך וחסאתם כי רעה גמלוך ועתה שאל נא לפשע עבדי אלהי אביך ויבך יוסף בדברם אליו: יח) וילכו גם אחיו ויפלו לפניו ויאמרו הגנו לך לעבדים:

"Yosef's brothers feared, for their father had died, and they said: 'What if Yosef will hate us and repay us for all the evil that we did to him?'

They sent word to Yosef, saying, Your father commanded before his death, saying: 'So shall you say to Yosef: Please, now, forgive the iniquity of your brothers and their sin, for they did evil to you, and now please forgive the iniquity of the servants of the God of your father.'

**Yosef wept when they spoke to him.** His brothers, too, went and fell before him, and they said, 'Behold, we are your servants.'" (50:15-18)

## Why did Yosef cry here? Source 8: A related Ramban

כז) וידברו אליו את כל דברי יוסף יראה לי על דרך הפשט שלא הוגדר ליעקב כל ימיו כי אחיו מכרו את יוסף, אבל חשב כי היה תועה בשדה והמוצאים אותו לקחוהו ומכרו אותו אל מצרים, כי אחיו לא רצו להגיד לו חטאתם, אף כי יראו לנפשם פן יקצוף ויקללם, כאשר עשה בראובן ושמעון ולוי (להלן מט ג - ז) ויוסף במוסרו הטוב לא רצה להגיד לו, ולכך נאמר ויצו אל יוסף לאמר אביך צוה לפני מותו לאמר וגו', ואלו ידע יעקב בענין הזה היה ראוי להם שיחלו פני אביהם במותו לצוות את יוסף מפיו, כי ישא פניו ולא ימרה את דברו, ולא היו בסכנה ולא יצטרכו לבדות מלבם דברים:

"It seems to me, from a literal reading of the text, that Yaakov was never informed that the brothers had sold Yosef. Rather, he thought that Yosef had become lost in the fields, and whoever had found him had taken him and sold him to Egypt. The brothers did not wish to tell him of their sin, for they feared for their lives lest he become angry and curse them, as he did to Reuven, Shimon and Levi .... **And Yosef, moral character that he was, did not want to tell him, and therefore it is written, 'They sent to Yosef saying, Your father commanded before his death, saying...'** Had Yaakov known of this matter, it would have been appropriate for them to ask of their father on his deathbed that he personally command Yosef, for Yosef would honor him and not rebel against his word, and then they would face no danger and would not need to invent words of their own."

## Trust?

### Source 9: Midrash Pesikta Rabbati: 3

ויאמר ליוסף הנה אביך חולה (בראשית מ"ח א') .. כיון שהרגישו ביעקב שחולה באו והודיעו ליוסף והרי כל שבחו של יוסף שהיה מפליג על כבוד אביו ולא נכנסו אצלו בכל שעה שאילולי שבאו אחרים ואמרו לו אביו חולה לא היה יודע אלא להודיעך צדקו שלא רצה להתייחד עם אביו שלא יאמר לו היאך עשו בך אחיך (ומקללים את) [ומקללם אמר] יוסף אני יודע צדקו של אבא כל דבריו (גזירותיהן) [גזירות הן] אמר ללבן עם אשר תמצא את אלהיך לא יחיה (שם ל"א ל"ב) ומתה אמי ואני בא לומר שיקללם ונמצאתי מחריב את כל העולם שלא נברא העולם אלא בשביל השבטים לפיכך לא היה הולך אצל אביו בכל שעה:

"When they sensed that Yaakov was ill, they came and notified Yosef. Is all of this meant in praise of Yosef, showing that his respect for his father's honor was such that he would not enter there at any time, and that had others not come and told him that his father was ill, he would not have known? [Surely not.] Rather, it tells of his righteousness – that he did not wish to be alone with his father, so that his father would not ask, 'What did your brothers do to you?' and curse them... Therefore, he would not go in to his father at any time."

However, there are other opinions – most notably Rashi - who differ with Ramban, maintaining that Yaakov was well aware of the sale of Yosef by his brothers. Throughout the parasha, we find a number of occasions where, to Rashi's view, Yaakov shows awareness of the sale of Yosef. Rashi agrees that Yosef's brothers did not tell the truth in their appeal to him, but not because Yaakov did not know the truth; rather, "They changed his words for the sake of peace, for Yaakov did not command thus, since he had no suspicions about Yosef." In other words, Yaakov was aware of what the brothers had done to Yosef, but never suspected that Yosef would seek revenge after Yaakov's death.

Rav Amnon Bazak's Footnotes:

We posited above that Yosef's dealings with two groups - the people of Egypt and his own brothers - express his repentance. Indeed, there are several interesting points connecting the two stories:

1. In both cases, people come to Yosef and offer themselves as slaves: "We shall be slaves to Pharaoh," "They said: Behold, we are your slaves."
2. In both instances, Yosef's reaction is favorable to those appealing to him, as described above.
3. In both stories, Yosef makes special note of one subject: feeding of children. When speaking to the people of Egypt, he says, "Four measures shall be yours, for seed for the field and for your food and the needs of your households, and TO FEED YOUR CHILDREN." When speaking to his brothers, he says, "Fear not; I shall FEED YOU and YOUR CHILDREN."