

"And this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He gave each one his own special blessing." (49:28)

From this *pasuk* *Horav David Feinstein, Shlita*, infers that all of Yaakov *Avinu's* enjoinders to his sons were actually blessings. In other words, when rebuke is internalized, it can be transformed into a blessing. Indeed, didn't Reuven and Levi correct their ways as a result of Yaakov's admonishment? Likewise, when Zevulun was told that his descendants would be marine merchants, travelling the dangerous high seas, he accepted his fated vocation without fear. Their piety increased, since they were now acutely aware of their total dependence on Hashem's mercy and beneficence for sustenance.

We learn an appropriate approach to life's occurrences from this *parsha*. We must reinterpret the circumstances we face. Even if events seem to represent an unpleasant reproof from Hashem, they are truly a blessing in disguise.

Horav Avigdor Miller, Shlita, notes that the *Torah* allots as much space to the story of Yosef as it allots to the building of the *Mishkan*. By studying the sequence of events, we are afforded a model by which to understand the life of every individual. Throughout Yosef's life we see the invisible, Providential Hand of Hashem guiding his affairs. We also note that those circumstances, which at the moment seemed harsh and cruel, were actually the source of benevolence and blessing.

This idea is consistent with the words of *Chazal* in the *Talmud Kiddushin 71a*, "In the *Olam Haba*, the World to Come, there will be a history authored by *Eliyahu Ha'Navi* and signed by Hashem which will be studied by mankind. They will then understand the purpose of all the events and circumstances of men's lives, just as we look back and study the history of events surrounding Yosef's life."

Horav Miller makes the following observations regarding the narrative of Yosef. Egypt was destined to be the national "birthplace" of our people. In order for this to occur, it was essential for Yaakov and his children to have gone down to Egypt. Otherwise, they would have died of starvation in Canaan. Only because Yosef had risen to prominence in Egypt did Pharaoh permit the "Hebrews" to gain asylum in his country.

How did Yosef gain access to Pharaoh? Pharaoh became angry with his servants, whom he later incarcerated. Yosef would never have met Pharaoh's imprisoned servants and interpreted their dreams had he not had compassion for them when he noted their sad faces. Interestingly, if Yosef had not been imprisoned in the same dungeon as Pharaoh's servants, they would never have met one another.

If Potifar's wife had not attempted to seduce Yosef or if Yosef had succumbed to her, he never would have been imprisoned. If any other Egyptian other than Potifar had purchased Yosef, the

woman of the house would not have attempted to lure him to her. The whole story could not have occurred.

Why was Yosef sold to slavery in Egypt, rather than any other country? It just "so happened" that when the brothers were prepared to sell him, a caravan of merchants passed by that was headed toward Egypt. Had he been taken elsewhere, he might have been lost forever.

The pattern of events preceding and including the sale of Yosef is consistent. That which seems an unfortunate circumstance is a portent for blessing to materialize. We all anticipate that one day, at the end of time, all of life's vicissitudes and ambiguities will be clarified and reinterpreted as blessings.