

"And Yehudah he sent before him to Yosef, to show (the way) before him to Goshen." (46:28)

Rashi explains that Yaakov did not have Yehudah precede the rest of the family merely for a practical purpose. He sent Yehudah to Goshen to establish a *Bais Ha'midrash* from which *Torah* would emanate. Despite Yaakov *Avinu's* original uncertainty, he was finally satisfied that Yosef was alive and well. The decision to leave his home and take his entire family to a country characterized by corruption and immorality was not an easy one. Nonetheless, Yaakov prepared for this sojourn in Egypt in a unique way. Indeed, his preparations should serve as prototype for us, wherever we may be, regardless of the spiritual landscape.

Why did Yaakov really go to such great lengths to establish the local *yeshiva* in Goshen prior to his arrival. Could he not have first settled in the land and then built the *yeshiva*? *Horav Chanoch Ehrentrau, Shlita*, responds to these questions based on an idea expressed by *Horav Moshe Mordechai Epstein z.l.*, The *Talmud* in *Megillah 3a* states that a walled city is technically labeled such, only if the wall was built first, before the city was populated. If the community, however, was settled first and then a wall was built, it is not *halachically* considered a walled city. What difference should the sequence of the process make?

Horav Epstein explains that when the city walls are built first, the residents are aware of their protective influence. Thus, they become dependent upon these walls. Indeed, without the walls they probably would not have settled in the city. In a city which was inhabited prior to the erection of its walls, however, the people do not feel totally dependent upon the walls for security. After all, they had lived there before the wall, and everything seemed to be fine. A city whose wall is not an integral part of the community's mindset is not a walled city.

Horav Ehrentrau asserts that the protective wall of Jewry is the *Torah*. This is consistent with *Chazal's* exposition on the *pasuk* in *Shir Ha'Shirim*, *vnuj hbtuw* "I am a wall." This refers to the *Torah*. It is the source of our security and the mainstay of our continued existence. This idea must be imbued into the Jewish mindset.

When Yaakov sent Yehudah before him to Goshen, he was sending a message to all future generations. Not only would the *Torah* continue to be the source of their protection, but without *Torah* there would be no community, no settlement, and no existence. Had Yaakov allowed his family to settle the land and then build a *yeshiva*, they might have come to mistakenly believe that *Torah* is not an integral part of the protective wall which sustains them.

We may suggest that this idea is the underlying reason that a *makom Torah*, place of *Torah* study, is referred to as an "*ohel*," tent. We find numerous examples of this concept in the *Torah*. The most notable is Yaakov, who was a "*yoshev ohalim*." This characterization refers to the time Yaakov spent studying in the tents of *Torah*. A tent is not a permanent edifice. It is temporary and designed

to move from place to place. When one studies *Torah*, he is erecting a protective wall around himself, sheltering himself from the adverse effects of the harsh environment. This wall moves with the individual wherever he goes, as long as he studies *Torah*. Without the wall of *Torah*, he is in danger of being exposed directly to the external elements which may be detrimental to his very existence.