

“I will fully provide for you there, for there will be another five years of famine, lest you, and your household and all that is yours become poor.” (45:11)

Yosef *HaTzaddik* pointed out to his brothers that it had all finally come together. The ambiguities that had plagued their lives could now be seen as the handiwork of Hashem, Who orchestrated events for a specific purpose. It was all becoming clear. Indeed, there is hardly another narrative in the Torah that so cogently demonstrates the ways of *Hashgachah*, Divine Providence. *Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl*, comments that this story is probably the most vivid commentary on Shlomo *Ha'melech's* saying: “The great Master of the Universe produces all things from their smallest beginnings. Be they physical or social, He causes them all to grow from the smallest seedling. It is He who causes all things to be born. Therefore, even fools and criminals are in His service.” Without awareness or will, even folly and sin serve His purposes. In this story, the threads lie revealed.

Rav Hirsch journeys back to the “two *sela's* worth of silk,” which *Chazal* (*Shabbos* 10b) suggest that Yaakov *Avinu* used for the embroidery on Yosef's *kesones*, coat, through which the promise of the *Bris Bein HaBesarim*, “Covenant Between the Parts,” came to be fulfilled. When we think about it, we realize that if Yaakov remained in Canaan, the chances of his family growing into the mighty nation that it became were unlikely. As the family grew, they would have merged with the surrounding population. In order to become a distinct people, it was necessary for them to live in the midst of a nation whose character and moral compass were in total contrast to Jewish ethos. That nation was Egypt.

It was not that much different in the Middle Ages in Western Europe. The fanaticism which gave rise to the Jews' separation – their relegation to living in ghettos – in effect, was the hand of G-d providing us with an opportunity to distance ourselves from the lack of refinement and moral filth that characterized the European gentile at that time. It also allowed us to cultivate the family unit, creating strong domestic happiness within our insular society.

Yosef was “sent” to Egypt years ahead of the family to establish the setting for the Jews of Canaan to come and not feel as if they were usurpers. By having their own place, no Egyptian could say to the Jews, “You do not belong here; you are an immigrant.” After all, the Egyptians themselves were compelled – due to the famine – to leave their own birthplace and move around. They, too, were strangers in their land.

Likewise, by the time of our exile – when we were forced to migrate to other lands – the entire Europe was already a land of foreigners. Hence, the expulsion edict, a result of bigoted Germanic intolerance – and cries of, “Go back to Palestine where you belong” – was quickly refuted with, “And exactly where were **your** ancestors born?”

Last, just as the first exile – when Yaakov *Avinu* and his family had to leave Canaan for Egypt – was the result of *kinah* and *sinah*, envy and enmity, our own exile, was the consequence of envy and baseless hatred. Yaakov's exile established the crucible of harsh fate. It was the beginning of the *tzaros*, troubles and misery, suffering and ridicule, through which all of his descendants were destined to pass. This "school of indoctrination" purifies them, so that they become capable of feelings of equality and brotherhood, which will engender the advent of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.