

Now, his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem. (37:12)..... A man discovered him, and behold! – He was blundering in the field. (37:15)

Clearly, the entire debacle concerning Yosef and his brothers is cloaked in profound esoteric secrecy. All we can do is to derive snippets of ethical lessons which we should incorporate into our lives. Perhaps the most powerful and illuminating statement made by *Chazal* is the following: "The tribes/brothers were occupied with the sale of Yosef; Yosef himself was absorbed *b'sako u'b'taaniso*, in his sackcloth and fasting; Reuven, as well, was immersed in a state of penitence; so, too, was Yaakov *Avinu*; Yehudah was engaged in the process of looking for a wife. Last – and most important – was Hashem, Who was involved in creating the future light of *Moshiach Tziddkeinu*."

Tzaros, troubles. Everyone is going through some sort of travail – or, at least, that is how it appears. Yosef is suffering. Yaakov is suffering. The *Shevatim* are certainly not happy with what they are compelled to do. Reuven has his troubles. Yehudah does not fare well. *Hashem Yisborach* manipulates everything for one purpose: to prepare the way for *Moshiach*. *Chazal* conclude, "This teaches us that before the first oppressor was created, the final redeemer had already been created."

Three times, the Torah writes that Yosef had some sort of an encounter with an *ish*, "man": *Va'yimtzeihu ish*, "A man discovered him" (ibid 37:15); *Vayishaleihu ha'ish*, "The man asked him" (ibid 37:15); *Va'yomer ha'ish*, "The man said" (ibid 37:17). This was not a human encounter. *Chazal* say that he was an Angel (Gavriel) in the likeness of a man. *Horav Yechezkel Abramsky, zl*, suggests that since Yosef is the one who was lost, it should have written, *Va'yimtza ish*, "And he (Yosef) met/discovered a man." Why does the Torah write that the man discovered him (Yosef)?

This, explains *Rav Abramsky*, is how we know that it was an angel in the likeness of a man who sought out Yosef. The *Malach*, angel, was dispatched by Hashem for a purpose. Everything is guided by Divine Providence. Yosef was "sent" to Egypt by Divine agency, in order to bring the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, to Egypt in preparation for the descent of Yaakov and his family to the country that would be their home for 210 years. This was the beginning of their exile. Everything has a reason. Nothing happens by chance. We should not err and think that angels were dispatched only in days of old. No, says *Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl*, every step of our lives is Divinely guided for a reason and purpose. At times, we realize this only many years later. Those who live their lives with their eyes open might even "sense" the angels during their encounter.