

And you will become lost among the nations. (26:38)

Horav Mordechai Ilan, zl, observes that, when *Klal Yisrael* is in exile, they are compared to a lost article. As long as a lost item has a *siman*, recognizable sign, which the owner can use to identify it, then a *din ha'shavah* applies, an obligation for the finder to return it. He may not keep something for which the owner has not yet given up hope. If an item does not have a recognizable feature by which the owner can identify it, he will be *me'yaeish*, despair of getting it back.

We derive an important lesson from here. The Jew must preserve and retain any identifying features which mark him as a Jew. These signs indicate that we belong to Hashem. His imprint is on us. As long as we show signs of belonging to an Owner, we may aspire that one day – soon – we will be returned to Him, and our long exile will finally come to its conclusion.