

Hashem removed them from upon their soil, with anger, with wrath He cast them to another land. (29:27)

Hashem was angry against the Land, to the point that He was about to bring on it the curses of the Torah. Instead, He removed *Klal Yisrael* from the Land and sent them into exile. *Horav Yosef Nechemiah Kornitzer, zl*, explains that actually being exiled from the Holy Land was to our benefit. Once the decree went out against the Land, it could not be rescinded. Had we been there, we would have suffered immeasurably – if we would even survive. Thus, Hashem's benevolence and compassion shined through and came to the fore as it always does. He exiled us. If we are not there, we cannot be decimated with the Land. Thus, we are still here today. This is like the parable stated in the *Midrash*, concerning a king who became angry with his son for his treasonous behavior. He swore that he would pass a sword over his throat. The king could not go back on his word. However, he was not about to kill his son. What did he do? He placed the sword in its scabbard and then passed it over his son's throat. He kept his word, but, his son was still alive to talk about it.

How often do we forget that everything that occurs in our lives is guided by Hashem for a specific reason? *Gam zu l'tovah*, "This too is for the good" is much more than a positive outlook on life. It should be our only perspective. Everything Hashem does is for a reason, which is often beyond our ability to grasp. Everything Hashem does is good, even though we presently are challenged to uncover that good. We could fill volumes with stories that underscore this idea. I take the liberty of relating a classic.

A Jew does not despair. He has no right to give up hope, because it is not his to give up on. It all comes from Hashem. *Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl*, relates how he spent World War II and its aftermath in the frozen tundra of Siberia. Following the Ribentrop/Molotov treaty, Lithuania remained a free state, until the Russians conquered and took it over. The *yeshivah* students, consisting primarily of Yeshivas Novoradok, were rounded up and placed in cattle cars for the ten-day train journey to Siberia. The Russians did not permit the hapless Jews to exit the train to address their basic, personal needs. They were locked in like caged animals for ten days.

They spent fifteen years at hard labor in Siberia. These students were very down; having to leave their Torah studies for slave labor in the coldest place on earth. How envious they were of the students who were able to escape from the clutches of the Russian soldiers; until they discovered that they had fallen into the hands of the Germans who forthwith included them in their final solution. In other words, what they thought was their disaster, was instead their ticket to salvation.

Rav Galinsky relates that when he arrived in *Eretz Yisrael* he was a broken person, all alone in the world, his family having been murdered by the Nazis. He was told to go to speak with the *Chazon Ish, zl*, to develop some perspective on the past and engender hope for the future. After pouring out his heart to the saintly *gadol hador*, preeminent leader of the generation, the *Chazon Ish*

replied, "Do you have a right to despair? Does the world belong to you? The world belongs to Hashem, and as long as He is the *Baalim*, Owner, of the world, you have no right to give up hope."

We place our trust in Him with the knowledge that whatever takes place in our lives is orchestrated by the Almighty for a reason. Giving up is not an option, because we are not in charge; we are not in control.

I close with the invigorating words of the holy *Klausenberger Rebbe, zl*, who, when asked how, after losing his wife and eleven children, could he go on, replied, "I lost my entire family; I lost everything, but I did not lose Hashem!" This is how we live; this is what engenders within us the courage to move forward. The *Rebbe* survived the purgatory of the concentration camps, adhering to all *mitzvos* including *kashrus*, eating an apple on *Rosh Hashanah* night, lighting candles on *Chanukah* and eating fruit on *Tu b'Shvat*. Never once did he complain to Hashem. Instead, he rebuilt and continued building in America and *Eretz Yisrael*, refusing to give in to despair.