

ORIGINAL ASSIMILATION

by Community Contributor

The *shevatim* say to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land, for there is no pasture for the sheep of your servants, for the famine is severe in the Land of *Canaan*. And now, may your servants please live in the Land of *Goshen*."

Why did Yaakov ask Pharaoh to let us live in the Land of *Goshen*?

Rashi explains that it was in order to establish a house of study [i.e. a *Beis Medrash*].

The *posuk* says, "For there is no pasture for the sheep of your servants, for the famine is severe in the Land of *Canaan*."

This *posuk* can be interpreted as a metaphor. Sheep is a reference to *Klal Yisrael*. As the *Novi* says, "My sheep (Israel) have been scattered all over the earth..."

Famine is a reference to Torah. For the *Novi* says, "... I will send a hunger into the land; not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the words of *Hashem*." Our nation cannot survive in any land without spiritual oases [i.e. *batei medrashos* or *yeshivos*] in which *Torah* is learned.

When did the trouble begin?

In *Parshas Vayigash*. As the *posuk* says, "They acquired property in it."

Not content with the land that Yosef had given them, they bought more and more land, an indication that they were no longer regarding themselves as aliens who were sojourning in Egypt, but as permanent residents.

The *Medrash* renders they were grasped by the land of Egypt - implying that they could not leave - to make sure that they would remain there as long as was necessary to fulfill the prophecy made to Avraham about persecution and enslavement. This has the further implication that Israel slowly became grasped by Egyptian culture, in the sense that they had begun the slide into assimilation.

Rav Meir Simcha HaKohein of Dvinsk wrote of the assimilated Jews of the ninth century, "They substituted Berlin for Jerusalem." Unfortunately, we substituted America for Jerusalem.

Throughout our history, it's been the same way. Approximately 200 years ago, Reb Chaim Volozhin told Reb Dovid, "...You should know, my son, that the day will come when the pillars of European Jewry will topple, when the yeshivos will be destroyed and uprooted. However, they will be reborn in the exile of America, the final stop of the Jewish people before the arrival of Moshiach..."

We came to this country and built *yeshivos* etc. as they did in *Goshen*. However, we continue building and expanding as if we settlers, until we get non-Jews angry at us because we are entering their territory. They get the impression that we will eventually take over the area in which they live.

Let us recall what Yaakov tells Eisav back in parshas vayishlach. "With *Lavan*, I have temporarily stayed and I have lingered until now..." *Rashi* explained that Yaakov was telling Eisav, "I have not become a great prince nor have I achieved status... I remained merely a stranger."

Rabbi Pinchas Winston states "We have to realize exile is not a home. Exile is not redemption, no matter how sweet it is."

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Anti-Semitic incidents increased 57% in the US in 2017 compared to the previous year, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), with cases reported in every single state for the first time since 2010.

Hashem created Anti-Semitism in order to keep us from assimilating. Because if He made non-Jews love us, that would be the end of our nation!

Rabbi Winston concludes:

Anti-Semitism follows the Jewish people everywhere we go. It is not racism, because it can be the fiercest in places that the Jewish people have the lowest Jewish profile. It is actually supernatural because it is a message from Heaven that an exile is coming to an end, so be ready. If the world is becoming less hospitable to the Jews, it is time to consider the possibility that the exile is coming to an end.

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