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*With
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ב"ה

Parshas Mikeitz

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Wake Up and Smell the Coffee

No story in the entire Torah is given more real estate than the story of Yosef. No story has more ink expended on it than the unbelievably fascinating ordeal of Yosef. Why is that?

Perhaps it is because contained within it is the secret to the Jew's survival for thousands of years. Perhaps it contains the key to the Jew's thriving in exile, and the weapon the Jews used when up against the Egyptians and the Babylonians and the Persians and the Syrians and the Greeks and the Romans and the Inquisitionists and the Crusaders and the Cossacks and the Bolsheviks and the Nazis and Hamas. The story of Yosef is the story of the Jews in exile and it holds the secret to their success. What is it?

We all know the story. The brothers almost kill Yosef. Then they send him to Mitzrayim. He rises in the ranks to become second in command. A great famine descends upon the land. The brothers go to Egypt to get food. Yosef sees them but remains hidden. He sends them back with food but demands they bring their youngest brother, Binyamin, along when they come back. They do so. Yosef places a goblet into Binyamin's sack of food, claiming that he stole it. Yosef throws Binyamin in jail. The brothers panic. They are doomed. Their father Yaakov will die of grief. Confused and scared, Yehuda, the strong one, trembling, steps forward and just as he is about to open his mouth, just as he is about to plea and cry and beg for Binyamin, just as the story is at its absolute climax, BAM! The parshah ends.

Now, why does the Torah end smack in the middle of the raging story? Why not include thirty more words to let us know what happened? Is the parshah intended to be a page turner? Is the Torah trying to be some sort of trilogy in which we split up the stories so you keep coming back for the next installment?

The Secret to our Success

Perhaps the answer is that the Torah is telling us the secret to our success, the key to our survival throughout the ages. And that is: **We don't need to know the end of the story to know that the end of our story is a good one.** We don't need to know the end of the situation. We know that whatever Hashem does is for the best, and no amount of pain and anguish will ever make us think otherwise. We don't need to know the end of the story, for we know there is a Master Plan and a God who is running it. We don't need to know what will happen at the end of a famine or siege or war or inquisition. For we know that there is only one author to our story, and you can bet your bottom dollar that He knows what He is doing.

When Yosef was sold as a slave to a band of Arab merchants, the Torah expends precious words to mention that they were carrying pleasant smelling spices. Rashi explains that it is telling us that Hashem will always look after the welfare of righteous people, and thus arranged that Yosef was sold to merchants carrying pleasant smelling wares.

Now, do you honestly think Yosef cared what those merchants were carrying? He was just thrown into a pit by his own brothers, who, only after deciding not to murder him after all, grabbed him, placed him in chains and sold him as a slave to Arabs, never to be heard from again. Do you honestly think he cared about the spices the merchants were carrying?

The answer is yes. For Yosef knew the secret to surviving our galus. Yosef knew that he did not need to know the end of the story to know that the end of the story was a good one. He was so sure that this was for the best that he had the mental space to look around him and smell the wonderful fragrance.

When we looked into the faces of the Egyptians and the Babylonians and the Persians and the Syrians and the Greeks and the Romans and the Inquisitionists and the Crusaders and the Cossacks and the Bolsheviks and the Nazis and Hamas, we were armed with the secret we got from Yosef: we don't need to know the end of the story to know that the end of our story is a good one. We don't need to worry what will happen to us because we know there is a Master Plan with a Master Planner. We look into their faces and remember Yosef and we gain strength. We never lose hope.

In our lives we sometimes let anxiety and stresses take up too much space in our minds, preventing us from seeing the ocean of goodness all around us. We allow the worries of the big things in life to prevent us from enjoying the small things. Yosef reminds us that if we were to clear up space in our overcrowded minds, we, too, would wake up and smell the wonderful scents around us. Yosef taught us the secret to our nation's ability to keep on keeping on. He taught us the anthem to which we have been marching down the road of history: we don't need to know the end of the story to know that at our end, all will be good.