

# THE CHABAD WEEKLY Voll. 4, Num. 7

Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210  
 Rabbi Yosef Shusterman 310-271-9063

This week's Torah portion, Vayetzei relates how a single and solitary Jew left his home and set out for a foreign land, arriving there with nothing, save for his faith in G-d. "For with [only] my staff I passed over this Jordan," Yaakov (Jacob) declared. Nonetheless, Yaakov's steps were sure and confident, as he had full faith in the Holy One, Blessed be He. Once in Charan, Yaakov quickly saw that there was no one upon whom he could rely, not even his relatives. His uncle, Lavan, repeatedly tricked and deceived him, yet never once did Yaakov lose his faith. Through outstanding service and dedication to G-d Yaakov merited to obtain great wealth. But Yaakov's main achievement in Charan was that, despite their growing up in a hostile environment, every single one of his children was a pious and religious Jew.

Avraham had one son who was good, Yitzchak, but he also had another son who was not, Ishmael. Yitzchak had one son who was righteous, Yaakov, but he was also the father of Esav. Both Avraham and Yitzchak raised their children in Israel and not in exile, yet they still had descendants who abandoned the righteous path. Yaakov, by contrast, raised his family in exile. Required to serve G-d in the most difficult of circumstances, he made sure that his twelve sons would not be affected by the negative influence of Charan. On the contrary, he strove to instill in them the Torah he had received from his forefathers and studied with his ancestors Shem and Ever, thus proving that it was possible to live a Torah-true life even on the other side of the Jordan.

In Charan, Yaakov merited both spiritual and material success ("And the man increased exceedingly") by virtue of his faith in G-d. But the spiritual "great wealth" he acquired was the successful rearing of his children, who were all upright and devout individuals. The lesson this contains for us at present is clear: The only one upon whom we can ever depend is G-d, to Whom we connect ourselves through the medium of Torah and mitzvot. By educating our children in the ways of Torah, the eternal Torah we have inherited from our fathers and grandfathers, we will merit to go out of exile "with our youth and with our elders, with our sons and with our daughters." And when Moshiach comes we will be fully prepared to meet the Redemption. May it be G-d's will that this happens very soon, and that we greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu speedily in our days. (Fron L'Chaim 5756, issue# 444, Adapted for Maayan Chai from Likutei Sichot, vol. 1)

## **"And Jacob went out from Be'er Sheva, and he went to Charan**

(28:10) The story of Jacob's journey to Charan is the story of every soul's descent to the physical world. The soul, too, leaves behind the spiritual idyll of Be'er Sheva (literally, "Well of the Seven," a reference to the supernal source of the seven divine attributes--sefirot--from which the soul derives) and journeys to Charan (literally, "Wrath"): a place of lies, deceptions, struggle and hardship; a place in which material concerns consume one's days and nights, sapping one's energy, confusing one's priorities, and all but obscuring the purpose for which one has come there in the first place.

Yet it is in Charan, in the employ of Laban the Deceiver--not in the Holy Land and its "tents of learning" - that Jacob founds the nation of Israel. It is here that he marries and fathers eleven of the twelve sons who will become the twelve tribes of Israel. Had Jacob remained in the Holy Land, the life of this pious scholar who lived 3,500 years ago would have been of no significance to us today. The soul, too, achieves its enduring significance only upon its descent into "Charan." Only as a physical being, invested within a physical body and inhabiting a physical environment, can it fulfill the purpose of its creation, which is to build "a dwelling for G-d in the physical world." (From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

## **The land on which you lie, to you will I give it, and to your seed**

(28:13) G-d rolled up the whole of the land of Israel and put it under our father Jacob, to indicate to him that it would be very easily conquered by his descendants. (Talmud, Rashi)

**And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head (28:18)** But earlier in it says, "And he took of the stones of the place, and put them under his head." This tells us that all the stones gathered themselves together into one place and each one said: "Upon me shall this righteous man rest his head." Thereupon all were merged into one. (Talmud, Chulin 91b)

**Jacob... took the stone ... and set it as a monument; and he poured oil on its head (28:18)** Monuments are built of stone. For a more monumental monument, one takes bigger and more substantial stones. What is the oil all about? But in order for the monument to be "a house of G-d" (as Jacob proclaimed, "And this stone which I have set as a monument shall be the house of G-d"), one requires "oil." Oil is extracted from the olive only when it is trod upon and crushed. "Oil" thus represents a person's self-abnegation and submission to G-d. To walk away from Eber's house--to walk away from fourteen years of in-depth Torah study to begin dealing with the material world, as Jacob did with his move to Charan, requires a great deal of "oil." Only one who has totally abnegated his own will to that of G-d's is capable of such sacrifice. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

**And it was told to Laban... that Jacob had fled... And he pursued after him a seven days' journey; and overtook him in the Mountain of Gilad (31:22-23)** Jacob had left behind holy letters which he had not yet extracted from Laban. This is why Laban pursued him - to give him the letters which remained with him. An entire chapter was added to the Torah by these letters. (Ohr HaTorah)

In other words, there are two types of "sparks of holiness" that a person redeems in the course of his life. The first are those which he consciously pursues, having recognized the potential for sanctity and goodness in an object or event in his life. The second are those which pursue him: opportunities which he would never have realized on his own--indeed, he may even do everything in his power to avoid them--since they represent potentials so lofty that they cannot be identified by his humanly finite perception. So his redemption of these "sparks" can only come about unwittingly, when his involvement with them is forced upon him by circumstances beyond his control. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)- [chabadonline.com](http://chabadonline.com)

BARUCH SHEPETARANI (1) (SIDUR P. 70) IS SAID WITHOUT MENTIONING G-D'S NAME OR KINGHOOD. IT IS SAID ON MONDAYS, THURSDAYS OR ROSH CHODESH, NOT ONLY ON SHABBAT.  
WE HAVE A TRADITION ATTRIBUTED TO THE BAAL SHEM TOV: WHEN ONE HEARS AN UNCOMPLIMENTARY REPORT ABOUT ANOTHER JEW, EVEN IF HE DOES NOT KNOW THE INDIVIDUAL REFERRED TO, HE SHOULD BE VERY DEEPLY PAINED. FOR ONE OF THESE TWO IS CERTAINLY IN THE WRONG: IF WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL IS TRUE, THEN HE IS DEFECTIVE; AND IF IT IS NOT TRUE, THEN THE TALEBEARER IS IN AN UNHEALTHY SITUATION. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, KISLEV 12).

***Do not pray. Prayer means there are two entities, one entity petitioning a higher one. Instead of praying, connect. Become one with your Maker, so that divine energy will come through you and into our world to heal the sick, to cause the rain to fall...***

-Bringing Heaven Down to Earth