

# THE Chabad WEEKLY

Vol 5, #7

Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

beverlyhillschabad.com

Rabbi Yosef Shusterman 310-271-9063

The Torah portion of Vayetzei begins: "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Charan." Beersheba is symbolic of a state of peacefulness and tranquility. The name itself commemorates the covenant of peace that was made between the Philistine King Avimelech and Abraham, and the seven wells that were dug after the covenant was made.

Jacob left this state of tranquility, left the study hall of Shem and Ever in which he had studied Torah and served G-d for 14 years, "and went toward Charan," the lowliest and most despicable location on earth. The name Charan comes from the Hebrew word meaning anger or wrath, as Charan was an alien and degenerate place.

In the metaphorical sense, at some point in his life, every Jew must leave Beersheba and go to Charan. Just as Jacob left Beersheba to find a wife in Charan, so too must every Jew leave the rarefied world of the yeshiva to establish a Jewish home, and involve himself in the world.

The most appropriate way to prepare for this is by being in Beersheba, i.e., complete devotion to Torah study. But life itself must be lived in "Charan" - in the material realm of the physical world. A Jew's mission is to serve G-d in even the most mundane or difficult circumstances.

This, then, is the lesson to be derived for every Jew: It is precisely through the trials and tribulations one encounters throughout life that a warm Jewish home is built. For it is these trials that temper the Jew and prove his mettle, making the foundations of his home strong and stable.

Let's examine Jacob's behavior during his journey:

Setting out in a foreign land to find a suitable match, one would think that Jacob would have tried to learn the local language, or dressed himself in expensive clothes to make a favorable impression. And yet, the first thing he did was pray, as Rashi comments on the words "and he reached a certain place."

Jacob understood that his success would not depend on taking simple physical action. A Jew must know that the very first thing he must do when going out into the world is pray to G-d. He must never think that just because he already prayed and learned Torah in the past, he must now emulate the "ways of the world" if he is to succeed.

On the contrary, when setting out from "Beersheba" to "Charan," a Jew must pray even harder! For the tests he will be subjected to in "Charan" are far more difficult than any he encountered before. He must therefore pray even more diligently, and ask G-d's help to withstand these new trials. (Adapted from Volume 1 of Likutei Sichot, L'Chaim 5761, #647)

**And behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven (Gen. 28:12)** If a person thinks that he has already perfected himself and "reached heaven," it is a sure sign that in fact, he has a long way to go. For it is only when an individual considers himself lowly and "on the earth" that he is able to ascend to greater spiritual heights. (Toldot Yaakov Yosef) (L'Chaim 5761, #647)

## The Audience

During one of his journeys, Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch stopped at an inn near the city of Samargon. It was summer, the weather was pleasant, and the Rebbe decided to stay for a week. When Rabbi DovBer's decision became known, many people from the Samargon area converged at the inn, wishing to be received by the Rebbe and to consult with him. The Rebbe began to receive each one in turn, in a private audience known as yechidut. A few days later, while hundreds of people still crowded the courtyard waiting to be received, the Rebbe suddenly stopped the yechidut and locked his door.

His Chassidim assumed that the many visitors of the past few days had tired the Rebbe and that he had taken a short break to recoup his strength. But after half an hour the Rebbe's secretary, Reb Zalman, emerged from the Rebbe's room extremely distressed, his eyes red from weeping, and whispered a few words into the ears of the leading Chassidim who had accompanied the Rebbe on his journey. These Chassidim became greatly alarmed, their faces turning red and white and red again, and a wave of horror spread through the crowd. All were at loss as to what had happened.

An hour or two later several of the elder Chassidim entered the house and listened at the Rebbe's door. They heard the Rebbe pouring out his soul, weeping and saying chapters of Psalms from the depths of his holy heart. Some of them fainted in distress. No one had an inkling as to what may have caused the Rebbe, in the middle of an ordinary weekday, to interrupt the yechidut and to be moved to such heart-wrenching prayers. Soon the distressing news seeped out to the anxious crowd, which broke up into groups and began to tearfully recite Psalms.

When the Rebbe finished reciting Psalms, he began to prepare for the afternoon minchah prayers. But he was so weakened from his earlier efforts that he was forced to first rest in bed for over an hour to recover his strength. Then he prayed minchah in the manner that is customary during the Ten Days of Repentance.

After minchah the Rebbe came out to the courtyard, seated himself on the platform which had been prepared for him, and delivered a lengthy discourse on the verse, "Wall of the daughter of Zion, let flow a tear as a stream." The Rebbe spoke of how tears cleanse the soul of harmful words and thoughts, and expounded on the merit of saying words of Torah and Psalms. The discourse greatly moved the audience, and reverberated throughout the Chabad-Chassidic community. Years later, Chassidim remembered that day.

The next day the Rebbe was very weak and confined to his bed, but on the day after he resumed the yechidut. Still, no one knew what had so greatly distressed the Rebbe and caused his fervent prayer and address. Rabbi Pinchas of Shklov, who had accompanied the Rebbe on this journey, was among the distinguished Chassidim yet in the time of the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. A few days later, Rabbi Pinchas asked the Rebbe what it had all been about.

A great sadness descended upon the Rebbe. Then he said: "When a Chassid enters into yechidut, he reveals to me the inner maladies of his soul, each on his own level, and seeks my assistance to cure his spiritual ills. To help him, I must first find the same failing—even in the most subtle of forms—within my own self, and strive to correct it. For it is not possible to direct someone else in cleansing and perfecting his character unless one has himself experienced the same problem and undergone the same process of self-refinement.

"On that day," continued the Rebbe, "someone came to me with a problem. I was horrified to hear to what depths he had fallen, G-d forbid. Try as I might, I could not find within myself anything even remotely resembling what he told me. But Divine Providence had sent this man to me, so I knew that somewhere, somehow, there was something in me that could relate to his situation. "And then it occurred to me that it must be something imbedded so deep within me that it was way beyond my conscious reach. The thought shook me to the very core of my soul and moved me to repent and return to G-d from the depths of my heart." From Igrot Kodesh Maharatz (the letters of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn of Lubavitch), vol. III page 379. Translated by Yanki Tauber in Once Upon A Chassid (Kehot 1994) - chabadonline.com

BIRTH OF THE MITTELER REBBE IN 5534 (1773), AND THE DAY OF HIS PASSING IN 5588 (1827). HE IS INTERRED IN NIEZHIN. ON 9 KISLEV 5554 (1793) THE ALTER REBBE SAID A MAAMAR, NOW PART OF CHAPTER 53 OF THE SEFER SHEI BENONIM (TANYA), DISCUSSING THE FIRST SANCTUARY. THE NEXT DAY HE SAID CHASSIDUS AGAIN - THE CONCLUSION OF THAT CHAPTER. THE MAAMARIM FROM ROSH HASHANA 5550 (1789) UNTIL 10 KISLEV 5554 (1793) WHICH INCLUDED ASSEMBLED WORDS OF COUNSEL FROM EARLIER YEARS, WERE THE BASIS FOR THE 53 CHAPTERS OF THE SEFER SHEI BENONIM (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, KISLEV 9)

***When business is down, envision yourself tomorrow when all the efforts of today have succeeded and you sit before a table set with all your needs. When business is up, pray for your livelihood at every moment as a beggar prays for his daily bread. For everything is in His hands.***

***-From the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe; rendered by Tzvi Freeman.***