

עֵפְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת ויצא
ז' כסלו תשס"ה

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This week's edition of
ATERES H^ASHAVUA
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IT'S CONTAGIOUS!

Yaakov Reich, 12th Grade

ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה

YAAKOV WENT OUT FROM BE'ER SHEVAH AND WENT TO CHARAN

Our parsha begins with Yaakov running away from his angry brother Eisav and going to Charan to find a *shidduch*. Rashi is bothered by the fact that the *pasuk* seems to be saying more than it needs to. Why doesn't the *pasuk* simply state that "Yaakov went to Charan"? Why does it state that he left Be'er Shevah? Is it really necessary to say that?

Rashi answers, "שיציאת צדיק מן המקום", that the departure of a righteous person from a place, leaves an impression on all who remain behind. When a tzaddik leaves a place, all of the *brachos* and grace go along with him.

Why is this so? How is it that one person can affect an entire city? If the city has people who are all doing the *ratzon Hashem* then the kedusha there is evident. Yet if the entire town is engulfed in *aveiros*, how can one person bring such *ruchniyus* to an entire people?

We can possibly answer this question based on a Beis HaLevi in Parshas Noach. The Beis HaLevi asks how it was possible for an animal during Noach's generation to sin with other species. Since when do animals have a *yetzer hara* to do *aveiros*? The answer is that since all the people in Noach's generation were involved in the *aveirah* of being with certain people when they shouldn't have, this automatically had a negative effect to all in that area. The power of that sin was so great that it even affected the animals!

Maybe this is the *pshat* as to the effect Yaakov Avinu had when he left Be'er Sheva. When a

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MAMA RACHEL CRY FOR US AGAIN

Daniel Pearlman, 9th Grade

In this week's parsha we see one of the most unbelievable acts anyone can perform. The act involves tremendous self-sacrifice, respect of a sibling, and obviously a lot of suffering; yet all done with the desire to prevent another from feeling the pain of embarrassment.

What happened? Yaakov went to Lavan's house in order to find a wife. He fell deeply in love with Rochel. He was forced to work for seven years in order to marry her. He did the work wholeheartedly, and it felt like merely a few days. Yet the conniving father of the bride, Lavan, felt that it was not right for a younger sister to get married before the older sister, and therefore planned to switch Rochel with her sister Leah. At this point, Rochel had waited anxiously for seven years, watching her fiancé working to be able to marry her, and now what? Her sister is going to be marrying him and she is not! How can someone let that go - why didn't she complain? Why didn't she tell Yaakov? Furthermore, according to Rashi, Rochel would probably have to face marrying Eisav! Who would want that? Even further, not only was Rochel silent about the matter, she even told Leah the secret code that she and Yaakov had made in order to be sure Rochel was the one under the veil. Rochel actually facilitated her own torture!

The answer is that Rochel knew that when Yaakov and Leah are under the *chupah*, and he would realize he's not marrying the girl that he intended to marry - the one he worked for seven years to marry - he's going to be upset and speak up, causing intense shame to her sister who is simply following her father's orders!

Chazal tell us, "If you embarrass somebody, it's as if you killed them". How can we understand this: "You can only kill someone once, but once you shame someone, you can shame him over and over, killing him over and over."

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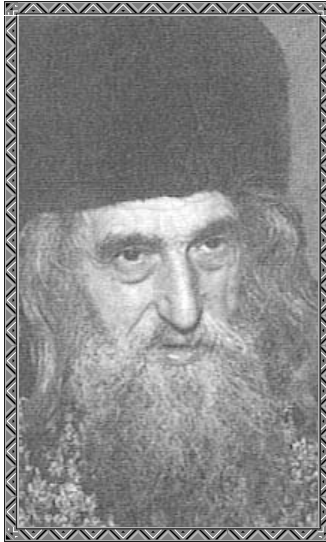
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HaRav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz zt'l

THE RIBNITZER REBBE

5656 / 1896 – 5756 / 1995



- Chaim Zanvil was born in the town of Boteschan, Romania in 5656.
- After losing his father at the young age of three, his mother took him to HaRav Avrohom Matisyahu, the Shtefenesht Rebbe, who took care of him like his own son.
- It was at this special abode where young Chaim Zanvil was able to develop to his full spiritual capacity in Torah as well as reaching higher levels of kedusha. The Ribnitzer Rebbe stated later, "He personally taught me from *aleph-beis* through the *sefer Osios D'Rabbi Akiva*."
- The Shtefenesht Rebbe sent him to study in Kishinev in the yeshiva of HaRav Yehuda Leib Zierlson, who was one of the tzaddikim of his generation.
- HaRav Zierlson had a special affection for the young boy and gave him a lot of respect.
- Before leaving Kishinev, Rav Zierlson gave Chaim Zanvil *smicha* in which he wrote about his talmid, "He is adept even in the innermost facets of the Torah, just like one of the gedolim of yesterday".
- During the Holocaust, Reb Chaim Zanvil was sent to Transnistria, a desolate region under the rule of the German and Romanian Nazis. Many Jews were killed there from hunger, disease as well as cold-blooded murder.

by Rabbi Baruch Rabinowitz, 11th Grade Rebbe

HoRav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz; The Ribnitzer Rebbe zt'l, was extraordinarily careful in areas of purity. He frequented the lake in Russia which was his *mikva*, two, three or more times per day. It is told that he once emerged from the icy waters of the lake, dressed, and climbed a long staircase which ended at the road, and when he accidentally saw a woman passing he turned around and descended the stairs and reimmersed himself in the icy waters twenty six times.

Many great people have attributed his extraordinary ability to pray for people and have his prayers and blessings answered to his enormous piety and devotion to purity. He was enormously grateful to his Shammos who went with him to the *mikva* in all seasons. During the frigid Russian winters the Rebbe zt'l would go to the *mikva* despite the exhortations of family and Chassidim to refrain because it was dangerous to his health. His Shammos would use an ice saw to cut a hole in the thick upper crust of the lake and wait for the Rebbe to immerse himself, exit, dress and return home. On many occasions he would walk into his house and his body was practically encased in an armor of ice. His gratitude to his shammos lasted his entire life.

During the summer my family used to frequently vacation in the ski chalet of Hunter NY. About fifteen to twenty families regularly vacationed there including such luminaries as the Bluzhever Rebbe zt'l and Rabbi Friedler zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Israel Toronto. Upon arriving one summer, some people mentioned to me and my friends that the Ribnitzer Rebbe was in Hunter. We were determined to find him and so

- Rav Chaim Zanvil served as shochet, chazzan and mohel, but most importantly an angel of *rachamim* (compassion) to all who needed comfort and support.
- During this time period he gave hundreds of Jewish children circumcisions.
- After being liberated, he settled in Ribnitz, a town near Chernowitz, Moldavia. Unfortunately, this town fell under communist rule, with its relentless oppression on religion. This caused many Kehillas to be sent to prison or banished to Siberia.
- Rav Chaim Zanvil was *makpid* not to give up any of his communal activities, and together with a dedicated Lubavitch group, he organized davening, *talmud Torah*, a mikvah, and proper *shechitah*.
- In 5732 (1972), he moved to Eretz Yisroel and after one year he moved to America.
- He was known to spend many of his days fasting while steeped in tefilah and *talmud Torah*.
- His private *sefer* of *tikkun chatzos* where he bemoaned the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash went for hours through the night; his actions were known to have an impact in heaven.
- He passed away on the 24th of Tishrei 5756, at close to 100 years old.
- Although the Rebbe did not leave children, the hundreds of Chaim Zanvil's that have been named after him testify to his impact on Klal Yisroel and will memorialize him for all eternity.

we began our search at the most remote chalet looking for garbage containing *cholov yisroel* containers. It was the second house! The gabbai refused to even acknowledge to us that the Rebbe was there and we left.

That evening, the gabbai came to the beautiful historical shul on Main Street looking for a minyan for the Rebbe. After some haggling and bargaining for "kvittel time", we went to the "*Cholov Yisroel* Chalet".

The Rebbe davened *mincha* and then proceeded to learn *all of Mishnayos Seder Kodshim*, pausing at the end of each *Masechta* to say *kaddish*. At the conclusion of *Maariv* we insisted that the reluctant gabbai keep "his end of the deal" – and with the endorsement of the Rebbe that "*ah vort is ah vort*" – we all presented *kvitlech*. Within two years nearly all brochos were fulfilled.

We requested of the Rebbe to explain the inspiration for the learning. He told us that it was the *yahrzeit* of the Shammos who would cut the ice for him. The Rebbe said that even in the howling nighttime winds they would go to the lake together. The Shammos would cut a hole through the ice covering the lake, lie on his stomach and stick his hand into the freezing waters for what could be five or ten minutes so that the Rebbe would see where to exit. In appreciation the Rebbe keeps the *yahrzeit* with fasting, Tefilah and Mishnayos.

The Rebbe would politely refuse to shake hands with anyone who did not go to the *mikva* that day. When I was learning in Yeshivas Bais HaTalmud in Yerushalayim in 1973, the Rebbe came from Russia and moved into the building

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Some opinions hold that you should even give up your life before coming to shame somebody.

"Even if someone learns Torah all day long, has innumerable mitzvos, and gives a lot of tzedaka, he forfeits his share in the world to come for shaming somebody."

How unbelievably huge is this responsibility we have to keep from embarrassing somebody. We all know in our own lives it's not so easy. We are selfish and want to be the best and come out on top, which often requires deriding another. Yet see the case of Rochel, who would have to endure the worst suffering - she's giving up her husband! This act of Rochel is a momentous act that has much importance to our lives.

After the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, many tzaddikim came to plea for the Bnei Yisroel; Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, etc. In light of none of these greats' merits were the Jews forgiven. It was only when Rochel Imeinu came to Hashem, when that famous cry that she eternally cries was heard by Hashem, was He reminded of this story; the pain of one to protect another from shame, that He promised, 'For you, Rochel, will I return Yisroel to their place.', "Thus said Hashem, Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for there is reward for your accomplishment and they will return from the enemy's land. There is hope for your future and your children will return to their border' [Yirmiyahu 31:14-16]." May we be zoche for the fulfillment of this prophecy speedily our day.

by Tzadok Picker

We begin our parsha with Yaakov Avinu leaving his parents, in order to take a wife and at the same time get away from his brother Eisav. Yaakov had a fear (as we see from his future suffering) that Eisav would get the best of him, because of his great *kibud av*. Not only that, but because Yaakov was to be away from his parents so long, Eisav had the opportunity to honor their parents more than his brother.

Yet as we will eventually see, Yaakov goes through all the hardships and survives them all. How is this? What happened to the handicap card played to Yaakov of not honoring his parents as much as his evil brother was able to?

The *pasuk* in last week's *sedrah* says "וילך עשו השדה לצוד ציד להביא", AND EISAV WENT TO HUNT FOOD FROM THE FIELD TO BRING." The Baal HaTurim says that the word *לצוד* is the same *gematria* as the words *מגול*, through robbery.

We know that Eisav was a *rasha* in every aspect, except when it came to fulfilling the mitzvah of *kibud av*, which he excelled in. However, after this explanation of the Baal HaTurim, we see that even when Eisav was doing something right, he still did it through an *aveirah* like robbery. This shows us how evil Eisav was, that even his mitzvos came through *aveiros*, and who knows how bad his *aveiros* must have been! We should all learn from here that when we do mitzvos, we should do them in the best way possible. . . and not through *aveiros*. Yaakov survived his hardships because he did things purely – let us follow his ways thus bringing merit to Klal Yisroel.

FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

adjacent to the yeshiva. When the cynics and skeptics in the yeshiva heard about the extreme piety and holiness of the Rebbe, they decided to test him. (ouch!) Three bachurim went to the *mikva*. One just showered, a second immersed incompletely and the third immersed fully. After davening on Friday night, each of the three passed the Rebbe to wish "Gut Shabbos" and stretched his hand to grasp that of the Rebbe's. The Rebbe deftly evaded the first two but heartily shook the hand of the one who did a full immersion. As the group followed the Rebbe out of the room, one person reached out and touched the edge of the Rebbe's *bekeshe*. The Rebbe suddenly turned around, looked at the culprit and said, "Because you're too lazy to go to the *mikva* I have to go?"

The Rebbe may have left us many years ago, but his call for *kedusha* and *taharah*, emphasizing sanctity and holiness is as timely as ever, *וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת*. Serving Hashem in the absolute sense must be preceded and accompanied by purity of heart. May we merit to accept the invitation.

YAAKOV REICH (continued from page 1)

Jew does the *ratzon Hashem*, he emits an aroma of *kedusha* that affects everyone around him. Yaakov affected his surroundings and everyone was able to feel that they were in the presence of greatness. He had such an effect on his atmosphere that when he went to Charan, he and his blessings left Be'er Shevah with him!

A story is told of a yeshiva bochur that once came late to Shacharis, and wasn't able to concentrate once he began davening. While he was trying to gather himself, his rebbe came in, went to his place and began reciting tehillim. The bachur noticed how his rebbe recited the words with awe and deep concentration, grasping the meaning of every word. He too began concentrating on his own davening, and with the

inspiration of his rebbe was able to delve into his tefilla with the *kavanah* he was originally missing. This change was all due to the bachur's rebbe simply being himself and having an impact on his surroundings.

Whenever we make strides in our own *midos* - whether our behavior during davening or our concentration in learning – we are not only making great accomplishments for ourselves, but we are also affecting the environment around us. . . possibly without even knowing it! Whenever we act for the good or the bad, the people around are affected and will react accordingly. Let our actions be the ones that influence people in the right direction, leading us in the path of our forefathers who ended their journeys closer to Hashem.

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l



אלקי אברהם ואלהי נחור ישפטו בינינו וישבע יעקב בפחד אביו יצחק ולא:ג
THE G-D OF AVRAHAM AND THE GOD OF NACHOR SHALL JUDGE

BETWEEN US, THE GODS OF THEIR FATHER, AND AVRAHAM SWORE
WITH THE FEAR OF HIS FATHER YITZCHAK

At the end of Parshas Vayetzei, Lavan asks Yaakov to enter into a treaty with him, whereby neither side could harm the other. Lavan also suggested that they peacefully coexist and live together as brothers, as despite the fact that they worshipped different Gods, they were still united by a common ancestry. Yaakov responded by "swearing with the fear of Yitzchak his father." What is meant by this phrase?

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l answers this question through a phrase found in the *haggadah shel Pesach*. The *Baal haggadah* writes, "צא ולמד מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו, שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים ולבן, *Go out and see what Lavan tried to do to Yaakov Avinu. Pharoh only decreed that the males be killed, while Lavan tried to destroy everything.*" This phrase is somewhat difficult to understand, as we don't find



anywhere throughout the *parshiyos* that discuss the interaction between Yaakov and Lavan that Lavan attempted to destroy everything that belonged to Yaakov. Rav Yaakov answers, that the *Baal haggadah* is referring to this very story. Lavan was proposing that he and Yaakov be able to mix freely, despite the fundamental differences that separated them. Had Yaakov agreed to a treaty of this extent, it would have meant the total destruction of all that he stood for, as under such circumstances, total assimilation would have been guaranteed. In

order to survive, Klal Yisroel must recognize the basic barriers that must exist between us and the nations of the world.

This can help us understand what is meant when the *pasuk* says that Yaakov swore "with the fear of Yitzchak his father." In agreeing to a treaty with Lavan, Yaakov specifically mandated that the treaty fit the lifestyle of his father Yitzchak. Yitzchak's principal *midah* was *gevurah*; absolute *avodas Hashem*. As such, Yaakov made it clear that a treaty between them must be limited, and could only work as far as it did not interfere with his *avodas Hashem*.

We must take a lesson from this. In order for Klal Yisroel to survive in the *galus*, we must retain a certain individuality that separates us from all the other nations. Let us take this lesson to heart, so that we may soon merit the *geulah sheleimah*, speedily in our day.

A few years ago on his first visit to the States, HoRav Aharon Leib Steinman *shlit"a* stopped at the home of Rabbi Malkiel Kotler *shlit"a*, where his attention was drawn to a tattered pair of shoes on display. "What are these," he asked?

Rav Kotler answered, "As you know, my great grandfather, Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l, was head of the great Yeshiva in Slutsk. When the war (WWI) threatened, all the students were sent home."

One student upon arriving home was told by his mother: 'I didn't send you all the way to Slutsk just so you should come home!' Not able to afford a train, the young man walked the 400 kilometers back to the yeshiva. When he arrived, my great grandfather Rav Meltzer was so impressed with this young man for having walked so far, he kept his shoes as a symbol of self-sacrifice for the study of Torah."

Rav Steinman listened, then spoke: "But surely the young man from WWI days is no longer living. Isn't it time to dispose of his shoes?"

"Not living?" said Rav Kotler. "He is living! That young man is none other than HoRav Elazar Menachem Shach!"

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