

## When you will come to the Land of your dwelling places that I give you. (15:2)

*Chazal* (*Midrash Rabbah* 17:3) ask why *Eretz Yisrael* was called *Eretz Canaan* (after the pagan tribe that inhabited the land prior to the Jewish nation's arrival). It is not as if they were a nation whose moral demeanor was something of which to be proud. Their spiritual affiliation was paganism. So why did they warrant such distinction? *Chazal* attribute their distinction to the fact that, when they heard that *Klal Yisrael* was on the way to evict them from the Holy Land, they cleaned up the land, preparing it for its new inhabitants. Hashem said, "Since you prepared the land for the new arrivals, it will be called by your name. In addition, I will give you a country that is equal in beauty to your land: Africa."

We derive from here that clearing a place, making room for others, is not a simple feat. While we must give up on our position/place for others, it is often carried out with great reluctance, dispassion and, at times, acrimony. We certainly do not clean and polish in preparation of the one who is assuming our job or place. The people of Canaan acted uncharacteristically in their preparation of *Eretz Yisrael* for the Jews. Their reward was the land's name and the nation's eventual move to Africa.

*Horav Aizik Scher, zl*, was the son-in-law of the *Alter, zl, m'Slabodka*. He arrived in Yerushalayim to *Yeshivas Chevron* (Slabodka) which was then presided over by *Horav Yechezkel Sarna, zl*, distinguished *talmid*, disciple, of the *Alter*. As soon as *Rav Sarna* saw *Rav Scher* enter the *bais hamedrash*, he cleared his seat (up front, as acting *Rosh Yeshivah*) and made a place for his *Rebbe's* son-in-law.

*Rav Scher* sat up front in the seat originally occupied by *Rav Sarna* – for four days. He then asked to have his *shtender*, lectern, moved to another seat. Seeing this, *Rav Sarna* asked, "*Rav Aizik*, is my seat insufficient that you seek to move elsewhere?"

*Rav Scher* replied, "Did you think for one moment that I would take your seat? Such an intrusion never entered my mind. All I wanted to see was how a person could give up his (rightful) place and give it to someone else. [It is one thing to relinquish one's position – but to someone else – it is even more demeaning] After I sat there for four full days and observed your sincerity in relinquishing your seat, I learned what I wanted to learn. I can now sit elsewhere."

I think we take for granted the feelings and emotions that prevail when one who has been in a position for years must, due to age or salary restriction, make way for the next generation. It is difficult. It is often demeaning, but it is the way of life. Some handle it better than others. Some put on a better show than others. Some go so far as to "prepare and clear" the place for an incoming successor. These are special people, whose achievements live on beyond their personal tenure.

