

## And Yaakov departed from Beer Sheva and went to Charan. (28:10)

*Rashi* asks the well-known question: "It needs only to have written, 'And Yaakov went to Charan.' Why does the Torah mention his departure? *Magid*, it tells us, that the departure of a *tzaddik*, righteous person, from a place makes an impression. For when he is in a city, he is its magnificence, he is its splendor, he is its grandeur. Once he has departed, its magnificence has gone away, its splendor has gone away, its grandeur has gone away." *Horav Chaim Stein, zl*, makes note of *Chazal's* (quoted by *Rashi*) use of the word *magid* (*she'yetzias tzaddik oseh roshem*), "it tells us," which is not a common term used to emphasize a derivation.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* quotes the *Nefesh HaChaim*, who cites the *Zohar HaKadosh* that teaches the significance of the word *magid*. It underscores the originality and innovative nature of the message. In other words, *Chazal* are stressing the fact that what they are about to say had not been previously known. This is similar to the interpretation of the *pasuk* in *Amos 4:13*, *U'magid l'adam mah seicho*; "He recounts to a person what his deeds were." This means that, when the soul of a person ascends to Heaven, to the World of Truth, all of his conversations (*seichos*) will be revealed. When spoken in this world, those conversations apparently have little to no meaning. In the *Olam HaEmes*, however, he will see the significance of his words: what benefitted Torah and *yiraas Shomayim* and what detracted from it. The spiritual toxicity and blemish created by his misspoken words will now be divulged. All the secrets will be revealed to his great shame. This is implied by the word *magid*.

That this idea applies similarly to *Chazal's* statement concerning the impact of the departure of a *tzaddik* and the void which his withdrawal from their midst created is not evident to everyone. It is only after careful and honest deliberation (which is done, each person in consonance with his individual ability and depth of understanding) that the effect of the void becomes clear. The more one thinks about the *tzaddik*, the greater the void his parting becomes. The *Rosh Yeshivah* wrote this in his tribute to Telshe *Rosh Yeshivah* and co-founder of the *yeshivah* in America, *Horav Chaim Mordechai Katz, zl*. The more we learn about his achievements, the more we realize the negative impact which his *petirah*, passing, produced.

It is sad that, at times, we do not realize and acknowledge the contribution of the *tzaddik* in our midst until it is too late. His death brings with it a heightened awareness of his qualities and the extent of his wisdom, compassion and moral integrity, all of which we may have taken for granted or not fully appreciated during his lifetime. While his physical presence may be gone, his impact may continue to be felt through the lives of the people he touched and the positive principles he embodied.

Perhaps we might extrapolate from the *Rosh Yeshivah's* idea and explain why *Chazal* use the term *tzaddik*, as opposed to *chacham*, wise man, scholar. A *tzaddik* is a righteous person, a pious man,

who constantly acts in accordance with Divine mandates and principles. He is known for his ethical conduct and devotion to Hashem. A *tzaddik* is also a scholar, learned and versed in all areas of Torah. He focuses, however, on elevating his spiritual state and clinging close to Hashem.

The *chacham* is wise, learned and has acquired extensive knowledge in all areas of Torah scholarship. He is deeply steeped in Torah study and has developed an expertise which allows him to expound upon and interpret Jewish law in various contexts. The community seeks his legal and moral guidance; they adhere to his word and halachic rulings. In other words, while both *tzaddik* and *chacham* possess extraordinary knowledge of Torah, their individual foci are different. The *tzaddik* focuses on righteousness, spiritual connection and personal holiness. The *chacham* emphasizes intellectual knowledge, scholarship and the interpretation of Jewish law.

Thus, the *chacham* is more *me'urav im ha'brios*, people-centered and blends with members of the community. His passing is noticed, and his impact on the community is obvious. The *tzaddik*, however, leads more of a seclusive life, spending much of his time in deep prayer, meditation and learning. Only after he is gone and the insightful members of the community begin to note that "things" are just no longer the same, do the people realize the extent of his impact. This is what *Rashi* meant by *magid*.

Some *tzaddikim*, however, live and interact constantly with the *ha'mon am*, average Jew. They do their righteous devotion in private; their constant devotion to the community is their hallmark. One such person was none other than the *Tzaddik* of Yerushalayim, *Horav Aryeh Levin, zl*. His total devotion to all aspects of the Jewish community earned him the title of *Tzaddik*. Nothing stood in the way of his helping his fellow Jew, regardless of the fellow's level of adherence to Torah and *mitzvos*. To him, a Jew was a brother, and the barometer for helping a brother in need was not his level of *frumkeit*.

His students – everyone considered himself *Rav Aryeh's* student – summed up their relationships with him. When *Eliyahu HaNavi* went up to *Shomayim*, Heaven, in a whirlwind, his *talmid muvhak*, primary disciple, *Elisha*, cried out, "Avi, Avi! My Father, my Father!" (*Melachim* II 2:12) Why did he not cry out, 'Rebbe, Rebbe!' Or, My *Manhig*, my Leader?' He did not cry out, 'My King, My Sovereign!' He could only cry out, 'Avi, Avi!' He did this because, for everyone else, one can find a replacement; a leader dies, a new leader assumes his position. A *Rebbe* dies, a new *Rebbe* takes over. For a father, however, one can have no replacement. It is a final, irreplaceable loss. *Rav Aryeh* was their father, no one could take his place.

The *Erev Shabbos* that *Rav Aryeh* was *niftar*, his body was brought by private ambulance to his humble home in Yerushalayim's *Mishkanot* neighborhood. The *taharah*, washing and purification of his body, would be performed there. His son then remembered that his father had once requested that, when his final journey had come to an end, the aged *Reb Menachem Klein* be the one to attend to his body. *Rav Aryeh* had a clear memory that when the great sage, *Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl*, was *niftar*, it was *Reb Menachem* who performed the ritual of preparing *Rav Isser*

Zalman's body for burial. In the midst of it all, *Reb* Menachem burst into uncontrollable weeping. *Rav* Aryeh asked, "*Reb* Menachem, you have been performing this holy ritual for years. Do you still become overwhelmed by the dead?"

"Oy, yes. When I attend to a devout scholar, such as *Rav* Isser Zalman, my heart grieves."

"If so," said *Rav* Aryeh, "I beg of you: when my time comes, you should be the one who does the washing and cleansing."

*Rav* Aryeh's son remembered the conversation and his father's wish. Yet, how could they locate *Reb* Menachem Klein? No one knew where he lived. Suddenly, as the family mulled over the problem, the door opened and in walked the elderly *Reb* Menachem Klein. This was a man who never listened to the radio and had heard no public announcements of the *tzaddik's* passing. How did he know to come? He explained that, that morning, he had sensed an impulse within him directing him to go to *Rav* Aryeh's home. He came immediately.

When a *tzaddik* passes, the void is palpable. Those closest to him, those who best understand and appreciate his impact, feel it most.