

WHEW! WHAT A MESSAGE!

by Rabbi Label Lam

And Yaakov left from Be'er Sheva and he went to Charan. (Breishis 28:10)

It was only necessary to write that Yaakov went to Charan, so why does the verse mention his leaving? In order to teach that when a Tzadik leaves a place he makes an impression.... (Rashi)

What impression does the righteous one make when he leaves? Shouldn't it be that an impact is made by his presence? What does Rashi mean?

King Solomon writes, *"Many a person is called a man of kindness but a reliable man who can find?"* (Mishlei 20:6) A lot of folks do generous actions and are credited as kindly but a reliable person is a rarity. In a book of original aphorism by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein called: A Candle by Day he states, "It is easy to make your presence felt but it is hard to make your absence felt!"

Just how had Yaakov made his absence felt? Perhaps we can judge from his reaction to the lounging shepherds of Charan the profound nature of his work ethic; *"Hey, the day is yet long..."* (Breishis 29:7)

In 1899 Elbert Hubbard penned a letter to explain who he thought was the real hero of the Spanish-American war. Here are a few truncated excerpts from that now famous essay entitled, "A Message to Garcia": "...When war broke out between Spain and the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail or telegraph could reach him. The President must secure his co-operation, and quickly. What to do?! Someone said to the president, "There's a fellow by the name of Rowan who will find Garcia for you, if anybody can." Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How "the fellow by name of Rowan" took the letter, sealed it up in an oil-skin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out on the other side of the island, having traversed a hostile country on foot delivered his letter to Garcia—are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail. The point I wish to make is this: McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, "Where is he at?" By the Eternal! There is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college in the land. General Garcia is dead now, but there are other Garcias... No man, who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well-nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man - the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a tying and do it.

Slipshod assistance, foolish inattention, dowdy indifference, and half-hearted work seem the rule; and no man succeeds, unless by hook or crook, or threat, he forces or bribes other men to assist him; or mayhap, God in His goodness performs a miracle, and sends him an Angel of Light for an assistant... My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the "boss" is away, as well as when he is home. And the man who, when given a letter for Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking any idiotic questions, and with no lurking intention of chucking it into the nearest sewer, or of doing aught else but deliver it... Civilization is one long anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks will be granted; his kind is so rare that no employer can afford to let him go. He is wanted in every city, town, and village—in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such; he is needed, and needed badly the man who can "Carry a Message to Garcia."

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