

דירה

Dwelling

A person needs to be very careful about the location of his dwelling. Behold, our Sages (Berachot 8a) said, “A person should always dwell in the place of his rabbi.” If he is able to live in the place of a Torah scholar, he too will find good. At least, he should live near a totally righteous and upright man. This can be compared to someone who dwells near a persimmon tree and absorbs its fragrant smell. A person should not live near an evil man. This can be compared to someone who dwells near

kerosene and absorbs its putrid smell. Our Sages (Avot 1:7) already said, “Distance yourself from an evil neighbor...” They (Negaim 12:6) also said, “Woe to the wicked man, woe to his neighbor; good unto the righteous man, good unto his neighbor.” However, the person who lives near a Torah scholar should visit him frequently and learn from his ways. If he will not do so, it is better that he not live near him, for he will be doubly punished because he could have learned and he did not. Also, a man should choose the city in which he will live, as I wrote about in its place, especially if he can live in the land of Israel. Our Sages (Ketubot 110b) remarked, “A person who lives in the land of Israel is like someone who has a G-d...” It is known that Jerusalem is the most holy place in the land of Israel. Therefore, a person – whose soul yearns and exerts effort to live in our land – should choose the best and establish his dwelling in Jerusalem, the holy city. May it be rebuilt and established speedily in our day! Unless he thinks that in a different city he will be more settled and capable of serving G-d. If this is so, then even living in the Diaspora is better than living in the land of Israel. This is true because this is the whole of man, that he should serve his Creator a complete and perfect service, and that he should be a resting place for holiness, as it is written (Shemot 25:8), “... and they will make for Me a holy place and I will dwell among them.” Our Sages (see Alshich there) explained, “‘in it’, is not written. Rather, ‘in them’”. And, it is written (Yirmiyahu, 7:5), “They are the sanctuary of G-d...” The holy Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 7) says, “Fortunate is the man who makes a befitting inhabitation for the Divine Presence in his heart.” In any case, at least in his old age – it is a time to have compassion on his soul, to return the charge to G-d – he should

do everything in his power to immigrate to the place of the altar. It should be the location of his death, burial, and honorable resting place. He must pray for this all the days of his existence, just like the declaration of David HaMelech (Tehillim, 27:4), “One thing I ask of G-d... to behold the pleasantness of G-d and to visit in His sanctuary. Perhaps G-d will hear his prayer!

