

CHAYEI SARAH

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT ISRAEL?

It's More than Falafel and the IDF

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Pinchas

Sarah dies at age 127 and is buried in the Machpelah Cave in Hebron, which Abraham purchases from Ephron the Hittite for 400 shekels of silver.

Abraham's servant Eliezer is sent, laden with gifts, to Charan, to find a wife for Isaac. At the village well, Eliezer asks G-d for a sign: when the maidens come to the well, he will ask for some water to drink; the woman who will offer to give his camels water to drink as well shall be the one destined for his master's son.

Rebecca, the daughter of Abraham's nephew Bethuel, appears at the well and passes the "test." Eliezer is invited to their home, where he repeats the story of the day's events. Rebecca returns with Eliezer to the land of Canaan, where they encounter Isaac praying in the field. Isaac marries Rebecca, loves her, and is comforted over the loss of his mother.

Abraham takes a new wife, Keturah (Hagar), and he fathers six additional sons, but Isaac is designated as his only heir. Abraham dies at age 175, and his two eldest sons, Isaac and Ishmael, bury Abraham next to Sarah. Many of us visit
Israel whenever we can. We love it for many reasons. What makes the Land of Israel special to you?



TEXT 1A

Genesis 24:3-4

ג. וְאַשְׁבִּיצְךָ בַּה' אֱלֹקֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וֵאלֹקֵי הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַקַח אִשְׁה לְבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקְרְבּוֹ.

ד. כּי אֶל אַרְצִי וְאֶל מוֹלַדְתִּי תֵּלֶך, וְלָקַחְתָּ אִשְׁה לִבְנִי לְיִצְחָק.

- 3. I will have you swear by G-d, the G-d of Heaven and earth, that you will not take a woman for my son from among the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell.
- 4. Rather, travel to my land and birthplace and take a wife for my son Isaac from there.



"G-d of Heaven and earth"

GENESIS 24:3

TEXT 1B

Genesis 24:7

ה' אֶלֹקֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לְקָחַנִי מִבֵּית אָבִי וּמֵאָרֶץ מוֹלַדְתִּי, וַאֲשֶׁר דָבֶּר לִי וַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַע לִי לֵאמֹר, לְזַרְעֲּךָ אָתֵן אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזּאת, הוּא יִשְׁלַח מַלְאָכוֹ לְפָנֶיךְ וְלָקַחְתַּ אִשָּׁה לִבְנִי מִשְׁם.

G-d, the G-d of Heaven, Who took me from my father's home and the land of my birth, and Who spoke to me and promised to give this land to my children, will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there.



"G-d of Heaven"

GENESIS 24:7

Rashi, ad loc.

ה' אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לְקָחַנִי מִבֵּית אָבִי". וְלֹא אָמַר "וֵאלֹקֵי הָאָרֶץ", וּלְמַעְלָה אָמַר" "וְאַשְׁבִּיעֲדְ וגו'?"

אָמַר לוֹ: עַּכְשָׁו הוּא אֱלֹקֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וֵאלֹקֵי הָאָרֶץ, שֶׁהֹרְגַלְתִּיו בְּפִי הַבְּרִיוֹת, אֲבָל כְּשֶׁלְקְחַנִּי מִבֵּית אָבִי הָיָה אֱלֹקֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא אֱלֹקֵי הָאָרֶץ, שֶׁלֹא הָיוּ בָּאֵי עוֹלָם מַכִּירִים בּוֹ, וּשְׁמוֹ לֹא הָיָה רָגִיל בָּאָרֶץ.

"G-d, the G-d of Heaven, Who took me from my father's home." But Abraham did not add the words "and the G-d of . . . earth," whereas earlier [in verse 3] he said, "I will have you swear, etc."

Abraham told Eliezer, "Today, He is G-d of Heaven and earth because I made Him familiar in the people's lexicon. However, when He took me from my father's home, He was only the G-d of Heaven, not of earth, because humanity had yet to recognize Him, and His name was not popular on earth."

The Anomalies

- 1. Rashi includes the words "Who took me from my father's home."
- 2. Rashi does not begin with pointing out the anomaly.
- 3. Rashi does not cite the words that raise the discrepancy.
- 4. Rashi writes that Abraham told all this to Eliezer.

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Luntshitz, Keli Yakar 24:3 שטבע האבות נמשך גם לבנים. וזה דווקא באותן עבירות הבאים מפאת החומר כאכילה וזימה וכילות וקנאה, וכל המדות הרעות הנתלין בחומר. נגעים אלו מתפשטים מהאבות לבנים, ותולדותיהן כיוצא בהם. אבל העבודת גילולים, דבר התלוי בשכלו של אדם, אינו מתפשט מאבות לבנים

על כן היה מרחיק הכנענים שהיו שטופי זמה, וכמה מיני עבירות הנתלים בחומר האדם, זולת עבודת גילולים, ולא הרחיק לבן ובתואל שלא היה בהם כי אם פחיתת העבודת גילולים לבד.

The genetic nature of parents is passed down to their children. This only concerns negative habits such as overeating, lust, greed, envy, etc. that derive from our corporeal nature. Such traits are passed down to the next generation who emulate their forebears. Idol worship is different. This is the product of education, not genetic disposition. . . .

Therefore, Abraham was wary of the Canaanites, who were lustful and succumbed to sins of passion, though they refrained from idol worship. Yet, he welcomed his relatives whose only fault was idol worship.

QUESTION

Why would Abraham select his daughter-in-law from Charan but refuse to allow his son to move there?

In the discrepancies, we see that Abraham had more in mind than just G-d's praise.



The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Likutei Sichot 15, p. 159 היות אז ער האט משנה געווען בלשונו - פריער "אלקי השמים ואלקי הארץ" און איצט נאר "אלקי השמים" - איז מובן אז אין דעם שינוי איז מרומז די הסברה פון אברהם צו אליעזר'ן.

Abraham adjusted his language. Earlier, he said, "G-d of Heaven and earth," and now just "G-d of Heaven." This discrepancy holds the answer to Eliezer's question.



Abraham was distinguishing between two *places:*

"G-d is familiar in **Israel** but still unknown in **Charan**."

TEXT 5A

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, ibid.

ווייל דאס איז נאר אין אן אופן "שהרגלתיו בפי הבריות" - בלויז אן ענין פון רגילות "בפי הבריות", אבער ניט קיין שינוי אין הנהגה און אין מעשה.

Because it is a superficial change, I only made G-d "familiar in the people's lexicon"—they changed their manner of speech. This did not change their habits and behavior.

ANSWER

Although Israel was reformed, their inborn negative traits remained. Charan, however, was free of those traits, despite not yet being reformed.

Therefore, Abraham wanted a daughter-in-law from Charan but didn't want his son to live there.

TEXT 5B

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, ibid. די השפעה פון אברהם, דער "ויקרא שם בשם ה' א-ל עולם" (בראשית כא, לג), ביז צום ווערן אויך "אלקי הארץ" (לכל הפחות אין אן אופן פון "הרגלתיו בפי"), איז ערשט געווען שפעטער נאכדעם ווי "לקחני מבית אבי". "אבל כשלקחני מבית אבי וכו' לא היה רגיל בארץ".

ובמילא איז דער ארט פון "בית אבי" געווען (און געבליבן) אין אן אופן וואו ס'איז געווען נאר "אלקי השמים ולא אלקי הארץ", זיי האבן ניט מכיר געווען דעם אויבערשטן, און "שמו לא היה רגיל בארץ".

When Abraham "called out there in the name of G-d, the G-d of the world" (Genesis 21:33), G-d became the G-d of the earth (or at least part of the lexicon on earth). However, this only began [in Israel] after G-d took Abraham from his father's home. Before that time, G-d's name was not familiar on earth.

It follows that in his father's home, G-d remained as He had always been—G-d of Heaven, but not of earth. In that region, they did not recognize G-d, and His name was uncommon among them.

Abraham valued the Land of Israel because G-d is more familiar to the people there than anywhere else.



Talmud, Ketubot 110b

לְעוֹלָם יָדוּר אָדָם בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲפִילוּ בְּעִיר שֶׁרוּבָּה גוֹיִם, וְאַל יָדוּר בְּחוּצָה לָאָרֶץ וַאֲפִילוּ בְּעִיר שֶׁרוּבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁכָּל הַדָּר בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל דוֹמֶה כְּמִי שָׁאֵין דוֹמֶה כְּמִי שָׁאֵין דוֹמֶה כְּמִי שָׁאֵין לוֹ אֱלוֹקַה. וְכָל הַדְר בְּחוּצָה לָאָרֶץ דוֹמֶה כְּמִי שָׁאֵין לוֹ אֱלוֹקַה.

One should always reside in the Land of Israel, even in a city mostly populated by non-Jews, rather than outside of Israel, even in a city mostly populated by Jews. Because one who lives in the Land of Israel is considered to have a G-d. One who lives outside of the Land of Israel is considered not to have a G-d.

Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, Exodus 23:20

שיש לכל אומה ואומה ועיר ועיר מזל וכוכב בשמים מורה עליו, לא ישתתף בהוראה ההיא אומה או עיר אחרת... אמנם האומה ישראלית אינה תחת ממשלת מזל וכוכב, ולא ממניעיהם, כי הוא יתברך בעצמו משגיח בהם ומשפיע עליהם . . . ומפני זה נקרא הקדוש ברוך הוא בערך האומות, אלקי האלקים, אבל בערך ישראל נקרא לבד אלוקה, או אלקים, או אלקי ישראל. לפי שהוא משפיע באומות על ידי אמצעיים בסדר מוגבל טבעי. והוא יתברך סבה רחוקה להם, ואלקי האלקים להם. אבל בישראל, הוא משפיע קרוב מבלי אמצעי. ולכן בערכם, נקרא אלקים בלבד, כמו שכתוב: "ואנכי אהיה להם לאלקים" (ירמיה כד, ז), ואמר: "אני ה' אלהיכם" (ויקרא כה, לח).

The needs of every nation and city are overseen by respective angels and stars designated exclusively for them. . . . The Jewish people are not under the dominion of angels or stars; G-d oversees and provides for them by Himself. . . . Therefore, concerning other nations, G-d is called the "G-d of gods," but concerning Jews He is called "the G-d," or "G-d of Israel." This is because G-d provides for other nations via intermediaries and a finite natural order. For them, G-d is a distant cause, a G-d of gods. For Jews, G-d provides directly without intermediaries, and is, therefore, called G-d. "I will be to them for a G-d" (Jeremiah 24:7) and "I am G-d your G-d" (Leviticus 25:38).

Our sages similarly (Pirkei Rabbi Eliezer 24) expounded on the passage, "When G-d gave nations their lot and separated the children of Adam" (Deuteronomy 32:8). This occurred at the

Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, Exodus 23:20 וכן אמרו בפרקי דרבי אלעזר (כד) על "בהנחל עליון גוים בהפרידו בני אדם" (דברים לב, ח), שבדור הפלגה באו שבעים שרים לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא והפילו גורלות על שבעים אומות. ונפל גורלו של הקדוש ברוך הוא על ישראל, שנאמר: "כי חלק ה' עמו" (שם, ט).

מפני שהיתה לארץ הנבחרת סגולה
הנפלאה ויחס גדול לקבול הניצוץ האלקי,
ולהיות העם היושב בה מושגח ומדובק
מהקל יתברך, מבלי אמצעי, ויתר
הארצות היו מונעות לזה ובלתי סובלות
אותו, הוצרך יתברך לתת לישראל עמו
הארץ הנבחרת. כי היא הארץ אשר "ה'
דורש אותה תמיד עיני ה' בה" (דברים
יא, יב) . . . והמקום הזה אשר בחר ה' בו
נקשר בקשר אמיץ ודבקות נמרץ אלקי

Tower of Babel [when G-d divided the people into seventy nations and languages]. Seventy angels appeared before G-d to draw lots over the seventy nations. G-d's lot fell upon the people of Israel, as the passage states, "For G-d's people are His portion" (Deuteronomy 32:9).

The Land of Israel has a marvelous ability to receive the spark of the Divine and to host the nation that is administered and attached directly to G-d without an intermediary. Other lands are unable to host and tolerate such intense sanctity. It was, therefore, necessary that G-d give His chosen Land to His nation Israel, the Land that He "looks after constantly; His eyes are always upon it" (Deuteronomy 11:12). . . . G-d tied His chosen Land to Him with a mighty continual Divine bond so He could oversee its inhabitants directly and with detailed providence. This is not the case with any other land.

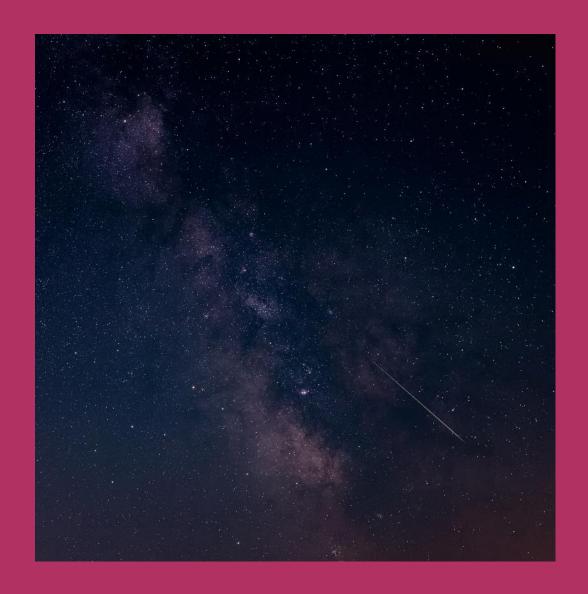
Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, Exodus 23:20 להשגיח ביושביו בהשגחה פרטית בלי אמצעי. מה שלא היה כן בשאר הארצות.

וכבר יראה אמתת זה מהקדושות שנמצאו בה תמיד. אם בבריאת אדם וחוה, שנבראו בה ונקברו בה. ואם ממה שצוה יתברך לאברהם שיצא מארצו וילך לדור בה, וגם כן מענין העקידה שהיה בה. וככה מהנסים הנעשים בבית המקדש תמיד, וממצות השמיטה והיובל

ובכלל אמרו: "ישראל הדר בחוצה לארץ כו"... והסבה בזה, שארץ ישראל אינה כו"... והסבה בזה, שארץ ישראל אינה תחת ממשלת שרי מעלה, כי היא מיוחדת להנהגתו יתברך. והדרים חוץ ממנה לא יונהגו באותה השגחה העליונה, כי אם מהנהגת השרים. וזו היא העבודת אלילים שזכרו.

The history of this land attests to its continual sanctity. Adam and Eve were created and buried in this land. G-d directed Abraham to leave his homeland to journey and reside in this land. The binding of Isaac also occurred in this land. The constant miracles that occurred in the Holy Temple also took place in this land. The laws of sabbatical and jubilee [during which ordinary produce becomes sanctified, are exclusive to this land]. . . .

Our sages taught that those who live outside of Israel [are considered to have no G-d]... This is because the Land of Israel is not under the dominion of the celestial ministers but exclusively directed by G-d. Those who reside outside of Israel elect not to be administered by His esoteric providence, but by the providence of angels. Thus, our sages compared it to idolatry.



Outside of Israel, our relationship with G-d is under the dominion of celestial ministers.

TEXT 8A

Genesis 17:8

נָתַתִּי לְּדְּ וּלְזַרְעֲדְ אַחֲרֶיךְ אֵת אֶרֶץ מְגָרִידְ, אֵת כָּל אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן לַאֲחֻזַת עוֹלָם, וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹקִים.

I will give you and your children after you the land where you currently sojourn, the land of Canaan. And I will be to them for a G-d.

TEXT 8B

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg, Haketav Vehakabbalah, ad loc. בביאור שם זה . . . מבואר דעת רבנו הגדול הגר"א זכרונו לברכה, כי עיקר הוראת שם זה הוא על שם השגחתו במעשי התחתונים.

To explain the choice of this name. . . . Our great teacher, Rabbi Eliyahu of blessed memory, explained that this name points primarily to G-d's direct providence over events in the terrestrial world.

Open Miracle in Be'er Sheva, www.5Townscentral .com On Friday, an "unexpected sandstorm" lasted about five minutes.

People who were standing outside recalled thinking that it was going to be a very windy Shabbat. But then, just as suddenly as it had started, it stopped. It was bizarre and seemed to come out of nowhere. However, it turns out it wasn't so random after all.

Here's what was happening in Be'er Sheva at that very moment.

Be'er Sheva hadn't heard a siren in months. The parks were full of kids on Friday, as is common before Shabbat. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a huge gust of wind hit, sending sand flying everywhere and forcing everyone to head home.

Just ten minutes later, a siren sounded. Five rockets were launched at Be'er Sheva. One landed in a playground that had been full of kids just 10 minutes earlier, causing massive damage.

That "random" gust of wind sent by [G-d] saved their lives.

In Israel, G-d allows His hand to be seen. Miracles are more visible there and occur more often than in other countries.



Talmud, Sotah 14a

דָרַשׁ רַבִּי שִּׂמְלָאי: מִפְּנֵי מָה נִתְאַנָּה מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ לִיכָּנֵס לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל? וְכִי לָאֶכוֹל מִפְּרְיָה הוּא צָרִיךְ, אוֹ לִשִׂבּוֹעַ מִטוּבָה הוּא צָרִיךְ?

אָלָא כָּךְ אָמַר מֹשֶׁה: הַרְבָּה מִצְוֹת נִצְטַוּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵין מִתְקּיִימִין אָלָא בְּאָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָכָּנֵס אֲנִי לָאָרֶץ כְּדֵי שֶׁיִתְקּיִימוּ כּוּלָן עַל יָדִי.

Rabbi Simla'i taught, "Why did Moses yearn to enter the Land of Israel? Did he need to partake of its fruit or be satiated by its goodness?

"Rather, this is what bothered Moses. So many of the *mitzvot* that G-d gave to the Jews can only be fulfilled in the Land of Israel. [Moses said,] 'I want to enter the Land so I can fulfill them all.'"

Zohar, vol. 3, p. 93B

וְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וּכְנֶּסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָקְרֵי אֶחָד, וְדָא בְּלָא דָא לָא אִקְרֵי אָחַד . . .

יִשְׂרָאֵל לְתַתָּא דְאִינוּן . . . בְּמָה יִקְרוּן אֵחָד?

> בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם דְלְתַתָּא, יִקְרוּן יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶחָד.

מְנָא לָן? דְכְתִּיב: "גוֹי אֶחָד בָּאָרֶץ" (שְׁמוּאֵל ב ז, כג). וַדַאי בָּאָרֶץ הֵם גוֹי אֶחָד. עִמָה אִקְרוּן אֶחָד, וְלָא אִינוּן בִּלְחוֹדֵיִיהוּ.

דָהָא "וּמִי כְעַמְּךּ יִשְׂרָאֵל". גוֹי אֶחָד סַגִּי לֵיה, אֲבָל לָא אִקְרוּן אֶחָד אֶלָא בָּאָרֶץ. When G-d and the Jewish people are joined, they are one. Without the other, neither is one. . . .

Where are the Jewish people [joined with the] one [G-d]?

In Jerusalem.

We know this from the passage, "One nation in the Land" (II Samuel 7:23). [Read it like this:] When we are in the Land of Israel, we are one nation. In the Land of Israel, we are one. Outside the Land of Israel, we are not one.

The proof is that the passage could have sufficed with the words "one nation." [Why do the words "in the Land" appear? To teach us that] we are only one when we are in the Land of Israel.



The sanctity and natural fit with the Jewish people make all Jews, even non-natives, feel connected to the land.

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Likutei Sichot 15, p. 162

Abraham lived before G-d gave us the Torah. At Mount Sinai, G-d removed the barrier between the celestial and terrestrial spheres, permitting "the lower sphere to ascend and the upper sphere to descend" (Midrash, *Shemot Rabah* 12:13). Abraham [who lived before this time] couldn't completely change and refine the fabric of the world and its inhabitants. He couldn't render G-d the G-d of earth by bringing people to a full [internal] recognition of G-d. He could only inspire them to speak of G-d.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, Igrot Kodesh 1, p. 485 בשנת תרי"ז, שאל אחד החסידים הגדולים את הוד כבוד קדושת אבי אדוני זקני מורי ורבי, הרב הקדוש הרב צמח צדק, זכר צדיק וקדוש לברכה לחיי העולם הבא, על דבר הנסיעה לארץ ישראל, תבנה ותכונן. ויגלה לבבו כי נכסוף במאד מאד לשקוד שם בתורה ועבודה.

ויענהו לאמר . . . "מיא דארף מאכין דא ארץ ישראל, מאך דא ארץ ישראל". . . .

In 5617 (1857), one of the great Chasidim asked my saintly master and great-grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, of blessed eternal memory, about traveling to Israel, may it be rebuilt and reestablished. He poured out his heart and spoke of his deep yearning to live in Israel, where he would devote his life to Torah and Divine worship.

The Rebbe replied, "We must transform *this* place into the Land of Israel." Render *this* place the Land of Israel."



Jews were dispersed throughout the world in order to spread the holiness of Israel to the entire world.

Midrash, Yalkut Shimoni, Isaiah 503

אמר רבי לוי: עתידה ירושלים להיות כארץ ישראל, וארץ ישראל ככל העולם כלו.

Rabbi Levi taught, "When Mashiach comes, Jerusalem will be the size of the Land of Israel, and the Land of Israel will be the size of the entire world."

KEY POINTS

- 1. Abraham wanted a daughter-in-law from among his relatives because of the pure natural traits that were common in his family.
- 2. Yet he did not want his son to live among his relatives because they lived outside of Israel, where paganism was still rampant.
- 3. During his years living in the Land, Abraham made the name of G-d a familiar, household name in Israel.
- 4. This continues to be true today. G-d is more manifest, and we are more connected with G-d, in Israel than anywhere else.
- 5. When G-d gave us the Torah, He enabled us to spread this consciousness the world over. When we complete this task, Mashiach will come. At that time, the world will be as holy as Israel is today.

