

**Eretz Israel**

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The Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that what [Shabbat](sabbath.html), [Sabbath](sabbath.html), is to [time](time.html), so Eretz Israel, the land of Israel, is to space.[[1]](#footnote-1) The [Shmita](shmita.html), or [Sabbatical](shmita.html), year [connects](connection.html) these [two](two.html). Space and [time](time.html) come together in a [Shmita](shmita.html) year. The next [Shmita](shmita.html) year will be 5768. It follows that we should [study](study.html) Eretz Israel as we would [study](study.html) [Shabbat](sabbath.html). Let’s look at Eretz Israel and its ownership.

**The Shape of the Land**: Even though Yaaqob’s Ladder has linear dimensions, Eretz Israel's boundaries are neither linear nor spherical, rather they are in the form of a man lying face-up on the ground with his head towards the East. His two arms are stretched out, one to the north the other to the south. His two legs are open. The one big toe is facing towards Hor HaHar - which is in the northwest area. The other is facing the river of Egypt, which is the southwest area. Between his two legs enter the Mediterranean Sea, which is its western border. In this fashion we find that the dimensions of Eretz Yisrael are an array of strips large and small. Surrounding all these strips is the Ladder. The internal level of the Ladder is the side touching Eretz Israel, whereas the external level is the side facing *Chutz LaAretz*.

Let’s see what Rashi has to say about Eretz Israel:

R. [Yitzchak](isaac.html) says: The Torah should have begun with, “This month shall be for you”,[[2]](#footnote-2) which is the [first](one.html) [mitzva](cmds613.html) that Israel was commanded. Why, then, did it begin with, “In the beginning”? Because of, “The strength of His deeds He declared to His people, to give them the heritage of the [nations](nations.html)“.[[3]](#footnote-3) If the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html) should say to Israel, “You are thieves, because you captured the land of the [seven](seven.html) [nations](nations.html)“, they say to them, “The entire [world](worlds.html) is G-d’s! He created it and gave it to those that He [wants](needs.html). He desired to give it to them, and He desired to take it from them and give it to us.” [[4]](#footnote-4)

Rashi tells us that [HaShem](hashem.html) gave His people the land of Israel. It is their [inheritance](inherit.html) along with the Torah. The Torah also shows [HaShem](hashem.html) clearly giving the land to the Children of Israel:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 33:50-54*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses in the plains of* [*Moab*](stages.html) *by* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *[near]* [*Jericho*](stages.html)*, saying,* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess [the inhabitants of] the land, and* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. And ye shall divide the land by lot for an* [*inheritance*](inherit.html) *among your families: [and] to the more ye shall give the more* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, and to the fewer ye shall give the less* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*: every man’s [*[*inheritance*](inherit.html)*] shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the* [*tribes*](tribes.html) *of your* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *ye shall* [*inherit*](inherit.html)*.*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 34:2***[*Command*](cmds613.html) *the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this [is] the land that shall fall unto you for an* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, [even] the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)*

Since [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us this land, we must take possession of it. Even if today is not the right [time](time.html) to return to the land, we must have it in the forefront of our mind. “Wherever we are going, we are going to Israel”. The land of Israel is our ultimate destination!

“Returning” is what we do when we go up to Israel. “Returning” is what we do when we repent from our [sins](sin.html).

The parallel between Teshuva (or “return to [HaShem](hashem.html)“) and entering the Land of Israel is supported by the fact that Teshuva, from the root word meaning “return”, occurs in the Tanach[[5]](#footnote-5) most frequently in relation to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) peoples’ return to the Land of Israel. This [teaches](teacher.html) that entering the Land of Israel (aliyah) in its deepest sense is the ultimate manifestation of return to [HaShem](hashem.html) (Teshuva), it being the [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) entry into an entirely [new](new.html) state of being. With this perspective we can begin to appreciate what our Sages in the [Talmud](orallaw.html) have told us:

***Ketuvot 110b*** *Anyone who lives outside of Eretz Israel, it is as if they worship idols.*

The Sages have thereby told us that there is a [connection](connection.html) between returning to [HaShem](hashem.html), through repentance, and returning to the land of Israel. This [connection](connection.html) began “in the beginning…”

The Torah begins with the account of [creation](bara.html) in order to prove that the earth belongs to [HaShem](hashem.html) and He can give it to anyone He wishes. When [HaShem](hashem.html) makes a [covenant](covenant.html) with [Avraham](avraham.html), He gives [Avraham](avraham.html) AND HIS [SEED](flower.html) Eretz Israel. Now we [know](daat.html) that his [seed](flower.html) was not through Ishmael, but through [Yitzchak](isaac.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 21:12*** *And G-d said unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *shall thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *be called.*

[HaShem](hashem.html) said to [Avraham](avraham.html): “To your **descendants** I will give this Land”.[[6]](#footnote-6) However, it is not clear who the descendants of [Avraham](avraham.html) are, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) or Ishmael? So the Torah comes to tell us that Ishmael is excluded from all that [Avraham](avraham.html) had, he received gifts instead:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:5-6*** *And* [*Avraham*](avraham.html) *gave all (“kol”) that he had to* [*Yitzchak*](isaac.html)*. And to the sons of the concubines he gave presents.*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) does indicate that Ishmael has some [connection](connection.html) to the land:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemot, Section 2, Page 32a***[*Abram*](avraham.html)[*prayed*](prayer.html) *to G-d: “O that Ishmael might live before thee!” Now, although the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, promised* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *that he would beget* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, yet* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *was so attached to Ishmael, that the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *had to promise him: “As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him... and I will make him a great* [*nation*](nations.html)*“. Through his* [*circumcision*](circumcz.html) *Ishmael entered into the holy* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *before* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *was born. Now, for* [*four*](four.html) *hundred years the supramundane representative of Ishmael stood before the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, and pleaded thus with him: “He who is* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*, has he a portion in Thy* [*Name*](name.html)*? “ “Yes.” “But what then of Ishmael? Is he not* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*? Why then has he no portion in Thy* [*Name*](name.html)*, like* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*?” The Holy* [*One*](one.html) *answered: “*[*Isaac*](isaac.html) *was* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *according to rule, [Tr. Note: i.e. with the peri’ah, or exposure of the flesh.] not so Ishmael; moreover the Israelites attach themselves to me from the* [*eighth*](eight.html) *day of their* [*birth*](birth.html)*, but the Ishmaelites for a long* [*time*](time.html) *are far from me.” Said he: “Yet, as Ishmael has been* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*, he ought to have a reward!’, Woe, woe, that Ishmael was born into the* [*world*](worlds.html) *and was* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*! What did the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *do? He banished the children of Ishmael from the heavenly communion and gave them instead a portion here below in the Holy Land, because of their* [*circumcision*](circumcz.html)*. And they are destined to rule over the land a long* [*time*](time.html)*, so long as it is empty, just as their form of* [*circumcision*](circumcz.html) *is empty and imperfect; and they will prevent Israel from returning to their own land until the* [*merit*](merit.html) *of the children of Ishmael shall have become exhausted. And the sons of Ishmael will fight mighty battles in the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, and the sons of* [*Edom*](edom.html) *will* [*gather*](gather.html) *against them, and make war against them, some on land, others on sea, and some close to Jerusalem, and* [*one*](one.html) *shall prevail over the other, but the Holy Land will not be delivered to the sons of* [*Edom*](edom.html)*. Then a* [*nation*](nations.html) *from the furthest ends of the earth will rise against* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *Rome and fight against her for* [*three*](three.html) *months, and many* [*nations*](nations.html) *will* [*gather*](gather.html) *there and fall into the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of that people, until all the sons of* [*Edom*](edom.html) *will congregate against her from all the ends of the earth. Then the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *will rise against them, as it says: “A slaughter of the Lord in Bazrah and a great slaughter in the land of* [*Edom*](edom.html)*“ (Isa. XXXIV, 6). He will “take hold of the ends of the earth that the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *might be shaken out of it” (Job XXXVIII, I3). He will wipe out the children of Ishmael from the Holy Land, and crush all the powers and principalities of the* [*nations*](nations.html) *in the supramundane* [*world*](worlds.html)*, and only* [*one*](one.html) *power will remain above to rule over the* [*nations*](nations.html) *of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, namely the power representing Israel, as it is written: “The Lord is thy shadow at thy right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*“ (Ps. CXXI, 5). For the Holy* [*Name*](name.html) *is at the Right, and the Torah is at the Right, and therefore all depends on the Right, and likewise the* [*future*](future.html)[*salvation*](salvation.html) *is at the Right, as it says: “*[*Save*](salvation.html) *with thy right* [*hand*](mashal.html)*“ (Ps. LX, 7). Concerning that* [*time*](time.html) *it is written: “Then I will turn to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord to serve him with* [*one*](one.html) *consent” (Haggai III, 9), and on that day “will the Lord be* [*one*](one.html) *and his* [*name*](name.html)[*one*](one.html) *“ (Zech. XIV, 9). Blessed be the Lord for ever and ever. Amen and amen.’*

[***Galatians***](galatian.html) ***4:29-31*** *But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him [that was born] after the Spirit, even so [it is] now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

Ishmael’s rights in Eretz Israel can be exercised when the [Jews](gen-jew.html) do not exercise their blessing of “kol”, clinging to [HaShem](hashem.html). Thus, our struggle with Ishmael for the rights to Eretz Israel is not simply a [physical](physical.html) struggle, but a [spiritual](physical.html) [one](one.html) as well. It will be successful when we realize the blessing of [spiritual](physical.html) connectedness that [HaShem](hashem.html) gave to [Avraham](avraham.html), and that was transmitted to us through our father [Yitzchak](isaac.html).

So we [know](daat.html) that the promise is to [Yitzchak](isaac.html) and not Ishmael, but how do we choose between [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and [Esav](edom.html)? And while it is possible to exclude Ishmael, since he is the son of the maid, [Esav](edom.html) is different, as Malachi states:

***Malachi 1:2*** *“Was not* [*Esav*](edom.html) *the brother of* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*, the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, yet I loved* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*.”*

Why was [Esav](edom.html) excluded and the promise fulfilled only with [Yaakov](israelja.html)? This is because in the *brit bein habetarim* ([covenant](covenant.html) of the pieces), it says:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 15:13-18*** *Your* ***descendants*** *shall be* [*aliens*](aliens.html) *in a land not their own, and they will serve them, and they will oppress them,* [*four*](four.html) *hundred years ... The* [*fourth*](four.html)[*generation*](toldot.html) *shall return here ... On that day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *made a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *with Avram saying, “To your* ***descendants*** *I have given this land.”*

Thus, it is clear that the same descendants who will be [aliens](aliens.html), and will descend to Egypt -- they are the very same descendants to whom the Land will be given.

Regarding [Esav](edom.html) it says: “[Esav](edom.html) took his wives, his sons, his daughters ... and went to a land because of his brother [Yaaqov](israelja.html)”.[[7]](#footnote-7) Rashi cites a [Midrash](orallaw.html):

*“Because of his brother* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*”. Because of the debt of the decree, “Your descendants shall be* [*aliens*](aliens.html)*”, which was placed on the descendants of* [*Yitzchak*](isaac.html)*. [*[*Esav*](edom.html)*] said, “I will leave here, and I will share neither in the gift, that this land is given to him, nor in the payment of the debt”.*

Therefore, it says in the end of Parshat Vayishlach: “These are the chiefs of [Edom](edom.html) by their settlements, in the land of their possession, he is [Esav](edom.html), father of [Edom](edom.html)“[[8]](#footnote-8), and immediately afterwards it says: “[Yaakov](israelja.html) settled in the land of his father’s sojourning”[[9]](#footnote-9), and the story of the descent to Egypt begins. The account of the [exile](galuyot.html) was fulfilled only through [Yaaqov](israelja.html), whereas [Esav](edom.html) settled in his possessed land.

Only through [Yaakov](israelja.html) was the decree of *brit bein habetarim*, the [covenant](covenant.html) between the parts, fulfilled, and only through him was the promise of the land fulfilled.

Even though [HaShem](hashem.html) gave [Avraham](avraham.html) Eretz Israel, He did required [Avraham](avraham.html) to do his part in taking possession. In the war that [Avraham](avraham.html) fought with the kings of the [world](worlds.html)[[10]](#footnote-10) in order to free Lot, [Avraham](avraham.html) became the owner of Eretz Israel because he defeated the kings who had previously owned it. [Avraham](avraham.html) defeated the kings of the [known](daat.html) [world](worlds.html). [Avraham](avraham.html) was the victor in this [first](one.html) [world](worlds.html) war and because of that victory he became the owner of the land of Israel. This manner of possession will be repeated by [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s descendants in the days of Yehoshua.

In all of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s promises, we see an element of human effort. [HaShem](hashem.html) requires that we do our part.

Those who follow [events](feasts.html) in Israel have noticed that the main protagonists have been waging war against each other in an effort to take possession of Eretz Israel. The descendants of Ishmael have been warring against the descendants of [Isaac](isaac.html). It is a war between those who *think* they are the [seed](flower.html) of [Avraham](avraham.html) and those who are the true [seed](flower.html) of [Avraham](avraham.html). It is / was between the children of the bond woman and the children of the free woman:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 21:9-13*** *And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, mocking. Wherefore she said unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, [even] with* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*. And the thing was very grievous in* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*‘s sight because of his son. And G-d said unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *shall thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a* [*nation*](nations.html)*, because he [is] thy* [*seed*](flower.html)*.*

# I. “Firsts”

Why is “[*First*](one.html)” more important than the “Best”?

Bikkurim [[*first*](one.html) fruits], Bechor [the [*first*](one.html) born], the separation of the Priestly gift of challah, the [first](one.html) shearings of the wool, the [first](one.html) of the dough, the firstborn of man and animal, all have something in common. They all represent beginnings; they are all “*Firsts*”.

The Torah asks us to bring the [*first*](one.html) fruits to the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html), the [Temple](temple.html). The Torah does not specify that we should “bring the best”; rather the Torah specifies that we should “bring the [*first*](one.html)”. Likewise, we are not commanded to pick the best or the brightest son to be dedicated to the Divine Service in the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html). We are commanded to devote the [*first*](one.html) son to that Service.

Why does the Torah insist on “*firsts*” and not “bests”? The reason for the preference for “*firsts*” is because the “[first](one.html)” sets the tone. “[First](one.html)” is the beginning, the foundation. It might not be so bad if a building has a flaw on the [fourth](four.html) or [fifth](five.html) floor, but a flaw in the foundation is very serious. The foundation sets the tone.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Each of the cities that we are about to examine is notable as a “[First](one.html)”. This suggests that they are foundational to the use of the land. Keep this in mind as we [study](study.html).

There are [three](three.html) cities at the [heart](body.html) of our conflict with the [goyim](gen-jew.html) ([nations](nations.html) – [Gentiles](gen-jew.html)). I would like to look at these cities that are at the center of this conflict. As we shall see, the fight over these [three](three.html) cities is a fight over existence. Somehow the [Goyim](gen-jew.html), the [seed](flower.html) of the bondwoman, realize that possession of these [three](three.html) key cities is intrinsically connected with their existence.

# II. The [Three](three.html) Cities

Now I would like to take note that there were [three](three.html) parcels of land, in Eretz Israel, that were *purchased* by the Patriarchs:

1. The Cave of Machpelah near Hebron where the Patriarchs and their wives are buried. This site was *purchased* by [Avraham](avraham.html) Avinu.
2. The field near Shechem where [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq is buried. This site was *purchased* by [Yaaqov](israelja.html) Avinu.
3. Har HaBayit, the [Temple](temple.html) mount, in Jerusalem. This site was *purchased* by David HaMelech.

The Torah documents the purchase of the land for the tombs of the Patriarchs and the land that contains the tomb of [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq . The only other parcel whose purchase is documented, in perpetuity, by Scripture itself is the site of the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html), the [Temple](temple.html), in Jerusalem. These [three](three.html) special places, in Eretz Israel, are mentioned explicitly in the [Midrash](orallaw.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LXXIX:7*** *AND HE BOUGHT THE PARCEL OF GROUND, etc. (XXXIII, 19). R. Judan b. R. Simon said: This is* [*one*](one.html) *of the* [*three*](three.html) *places regarding which the* [*nations*](nations.html) *of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *cannot taunt Israel and say, ‘ Ye have stolen them.’ These are they: The cave of Machpelah, the [site of the]* [*Temple*](temple.html)*, and the sepulcher of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq . The cave of Machpelah: And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *weighed to Ephron the silver (Gen. XXIII, 16). The* [*Temple*](temple.html)*: So David gave to Ornan for the place* [*six*](six.html) *hundred shekels of gold (I Chron. XXI, 25). And* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTzaddik’s sepulcher: AND HE BOUGHT THE PARCEL OF GROUND.*

R. Aharon Soloveitchik[[12]](#footnote-12) calls this kind of acquisition “chazakah”, holding. It comes from [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [commandment](cmds613.html) to [Adam](adam.html) “to guard the garden and keep it”. (Bereshit 2:13) This is the gift of reaching unto things through cultivation, work and dedication.

How tragically ironic it is that it is in regard to these very areas: Hebron, Shechem, and the [Temple](temple.html) Mount, we are forced to stand up against the [world](worlds.html) to defend our rights of ownership.

“The entire war is based on who’s in charge of the holy sites. The Arabs sense that their life force comes from the [Jews](gen-jew.html)’ holy sites. That’s why their battles have always been focused on the tombs of the righteous, because these places nourish their life force. It’s no wonder that they hold fast to *Kever (the tomb of)* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)*, Kever Rachel Imeinu,* Machpelah*,* and most importantly,The[Temple](temple.html)mount*.*”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Now these [three](three.html) cities Shechem, Hebron, and Jerusalem all share certain common features:

1. The [three](three.html) cities are located in the hill country.
2. The [three](three.html) cities lie in the center ([east](east.html) to west) of Israel. Additionally, Jerusalem lies in the center, north to south, of Eretz Israel.[[14]](#footnote-14)
3. The [three](three.html) cities are situated in places of high temperature.[[15]](#footnote-15)
4. Each is associated with a “double”. Shechem is also called Dothan which means “dual wells”, Machpelah is a double cave, and Jerusalem is the double of the heavenly Jerusalem.[[16]](#footnote-16)
5. They are all related to the Levites as [two](two.html) were [cities of refuge](elul.html) and the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) was built in the [third](three.html) city.
6. They are border cities between adjacent [tribes](tribes.html). Shechem is between Manasseh and Ephraim, Hebron is between Judah and Dan, and the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) is between [Benjamin](benyamin.html) and Judah.
7. They were the only cities purchased for money.
8. All [three](three.html) had something precious from Mitzrayim (Egypt): Jerusalem had the [Ark](ark.html), Hebron had [Yaaqov](israelja.html) Avinu, and Shechem had [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq.
9. All [three](three.html) cities were on the same trade route. “The Way of the Patriarchs” also called the “Ridge Route”.
10. Each of these cities is distinctly associated with [Avraham](avraham.html) Avinu: Moriah with the [Akeida](human.html), Shechem with his entrance to Eretz Israel, and Machpelah with his burial.
11. Each of these cities is distinctly associated with [Yaaqov](israelja.html) Avinu: Shechem is where [Yaaqov](israelja.html) entered the land when returning from Laban and where he purchased the area of [Yosef](joseph.html)’s tomb, Jerusalem AKA Beit El with the ladder vision, and Machpelah as his burial place.
12. Each of these is the city of a king. Shechem from whence [Avraham](avraham.html) Avinu defeated the kings of the [world](worlds.html) and where Rehoboam was crowned king, Hebron where David HaMelech was crowned King, and Jerusalem where David reigned as king over all Israel.
13. Each of these cities is associated with [redemption](redemption.html) because each was purchased, for money, after they were promised to [Avraham](avraham.html) and after [Avraham](avraham.html) defeated the [five](five.html) kings.
14. Each of these places is associated with an altar. This indicates that each of these places was a place of worship and a place where our [fathers](fathers.html) expressed their gratefulness to [HaShem](hashem.html). Curiously, each of these [three](three.html) is also associated with an altar built by [Avraham](avraham.html).

As [Jews](gen-jew.html), we believe that legally and morally according to our [laws](law.html) and history these places are part of our [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html). However, this is not just an historical and religious claim, it also represents a value of “Shayichut Eretz Israel”; the [connection](connection.html) to the Land of Israel.

When [Avraham](avraham.html) [first](one.html) came to the land, the Torah tells us where [Avraham](avraham.html) went:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 12:6-9*** *And* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite [was] then in the land. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *appeared unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, and said, Unto thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the* [*east*](east.html) *of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, [having] Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the* [*east*](east.html)*: and there he builded an altar unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and called upon the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. And* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *journeyed, going on still toward the south.*

It appears that [Avraham](avraham.html) went [first](one.html) to Shechem, then to Jerusalem, and finally he went south to the area of Hebron. These [three](three.html) places seem to contain the essence of the land as promised to [Avraham](avraham.html).

The [three](three.html) cities were purchased with money and provide a proof that they belong to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. The purchase of land by Jeremiah[[17]](#footnote-17), serves as a proof that the purchase of the land is inviolate and constitutes a firm link to the land for the purchaser and his offspring.

Each of these cities also symbolizes an eternal contact point that must be maintained or else we will have the appropriate problem:

## Shechem - *שכם*



**Kever** [**Yosef**](joseph.html) **(Shechem)** – The eternal contact point to the land, of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) soul. This area of Shechem was purchased by [Yaaqov](israelja.html) Avinu, for a hundred kesitah’,[[18]](#footnote-18) and [Yosef](joseph.html) was carried up from Mitzrayim[[19]](#footnote-19) to be buried here.

Shechem is a city of central Israel; called **Sichem** in Bereshit 12:6, **Shalem,** according to some commentators;[[20]](#footnote-20) **Sychem** in II Luqas 7:16; and **Sychar** in Yochanan 4:5. Its situation is indicated as in Mount Ephraim in Yehoshua 20:7 and I Melachim 12:25:

***1 Kings 12:25-29*** *Then Jeroboam built Sh’chem in Mount Ephraim, and lived there; and went out from there, and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his* [*heart*](body.html)*, ‘Now shall the kingdom return to the House of David. If this people go up to do* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *in the House of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the* [*heart*](body.html) *of this people turn back to their Lord, to Rehoboam King of Yehudah, and they shall kill me, and go back to Rehoboam King of Yehudah.*

*And the king took counsel, and made* [*two*](two.html) *calves of gold, and said to them, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your G-ds, O Israel, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” And he set* [*one*](one.html) *in Beit-El, and the other he placed in Dan.*

But from Shoftim (Judges) 9:7 it seems to have been immediately below Mount Gerizim, and it is therefore placed by [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq us[[21]](#footnote-21) between Gerizim and Ebal. Shechem is elsewhere stated to have been in the neighborhood of Dothan[[22]](#footnote-22), north of Shiloh[[23]](#footnote-23). [[24]](#footnote-24)

**Shechem means “shoulder” or “ridge”.**

The word Shechem means “Shoulder“. A “shoulder” represents the power to connect the back state of [knowledge](knowledge.html) (secular science) and wisdom to the front state of [knowledge](knowledge.html) and wisdom (Torah). Shechem is the bridge.

Anatomically, Shechem represents the [head](body.html)[[25]](#footnote-25) and specifically the [brain](brain.html), which is composed of [three](three.html) main parts (left hemisphere, right hemisphere, and [midbrain](brain.html)), as we can see in the following illustration:



Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim are the left and right hemispheres. Shechem is the [midbrain](brain.html), the center of the [head](body.html), *the* place of [connection](connection.html). It is centered left to right, top to bottom, and front to back in the very center of the [head](body.html). This the place of [connection](connection.html) between the [body](body.html) and the [head](body.html). It is the point of origin for the [creation](bara.html) of a talmid, a soul destined for the next [world](worlds.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis C:9*** *R. Simlai said: [He assured them]: Ye are the* [*body*](body.html) *and I am the* [*head*](body.html)*, as it says, Let the blessing come upon the* [*head*](body.html)*, [viz.]* [*Joseph*](joseph.html)*:[[26]](#footnote-26) if the* [*body*](body.html) *is removed, of what use is the* [*head*](body.html)*?*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) on Kohelet 2:13, says that the “folly” in the following pasuk, is science and the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of the sciences:

***Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 2:13*** *Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.*

Shlomo HaMelech, King Solomon, was saying that when astronomy and mathematics are used to explain the [laws](law.html) of the [new](new.html) [moon](chodesh.html), this scientific [knowledge](knowledge.html) ceases to be secular. It becomes part of Torah. The darkness is transformed into light, a greater light than that derived directly from the Torah. This is the “advantage” that Shlomo HaMelech is talking about. The light resulting from transformed darkness has an advantage over the light derived directly from the Torah.

The greatness of Shlomo HaMelech’s[[27]](#footnote-27) wisdom was due in part to his having transformed the sciences. This transformation of “non-sense” into wisdom is a major part of the refinement of the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) that prepares it for and actually brings about the highest revelations in the Torah to be revealed by [Mashiach](mashiach.html). It is a process which actually began with [Yosef](joseph.html), who was the master over ancient Egypt and its wisdom, reached a very high level with Shlomo HaMelech, and will be completed by [Mashiach](mashiach.html) himself.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Rashi says that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *shechem*, means “portion,” or “division”[[29]](#footnote-29); inherent in the [name](name.html) *Shechem* is the idea of divisiveness.[[30]](#footnote-30)

The gematria of Shechem is 360, or, 36 x 10.

Shechem is a place designed for trouble[[31]](#footnote-31): Here Dina was profaned, here [Yosef](joseph.html) was sold, here Avimelech killed his brothers and here the kingship was split. But Shechem was also given as a present to [Yosef](joseph.html): “And I have given thee [one](one.html) shoulder (=Shechem) over thy brothers)”. It therefore signifies the complete [connection](connection.html) of the [tribes](tribes.html) to [Yosef](joseph.html) and his unique way of elevating everything secular to holiness.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Shechem is written: *shin, chof, mem* שכם. If the *shin* and the *mem* are joined together, they spell the word *shem* which means “[name](name.html)”, a common pseudo [name](name.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself. Unfortunately, in the word *shechem*, the “[Name](name.html)” is divided: the *shin* and the *mem* are separated by the [letter](letters.html) ***chof***.

This might not have seemed significant, had the [letter](letters.html) *chof* not represented the [number](nchart.html) [*twenty*](twenty.html), and had the [number](nchart.html) [twenty](twenty.html) not been so closely related to vision, or rather, *the lack of it*. And as we will soon see, the problem with Shechem, and all that occurred there had *everything* to do with a *lack* of vision.

The [three](three.html) [letters](letters.html) of “Shechem” (shin-chof-mem) are also within the word “[Mishkan](mikdash.html) (the [sanctuary](mikdash.html) in the wilderness)” (mem-shin-chof-nun), with the addition of the [letter](letters.html) “nun”, which always symbolizes the “Nun Shaarei Binah”, the “Fifty Gates of Understanding.” The extra “nun” makes the total numerical value of the word “[Mishkan](mikdash.html)” equal 410, precisely the [number](nchart.html) of years the [First](one.html) [Temple](temple.html) stood (2928 - 3338) before being destroyed by Nubuchadnetzar’s army.



Kever [Yosef](joseph.html)

[**Avraham**](avraham.html) **Avinu**

The [first](one.html) mention of Shechem occurs in [connection](connection.html) with [Avraham](avraham.html), who, on his [first](one.html) sojourn to the land of Canaan, built an altar under the oak of Moreh on the site where later Shechem was built (Bereshit 12:6). In this pasuk, [HaShem](hashem.html) promises to give this land to [Avraham](avraham.html) and his [seed](flower.html). The Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that the [first](one.html) appearance of a word defines the word and its intrinsic meaning. This tells us that the land of Israel, and its possession by [Avraham](avraham.html) and his [seed](flower.html), is bound up in the word *Shechem*.

Shechem was situated on the north-south ancient highway through Samaria. As such, it was the [first](one.html) stop of [Avraham](avraham.html) when he came into the Land of Canaan. Shechem is the [first](one.html) arrival point.Shechem is alsothe [first](one.html) place in the Land of Canaan in which [HaShem](hashem.html) appeared to [Avraham](avraham.html), promising that the land would be given to his descendants, as we read in this pasuk from Lech Lecha:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 12:6-7*** *And* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite [was] then in the land. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *appeared unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, and said, Unto thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, who appeared unto him.*

Shechem is [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s [first](one.html) step in forming a [connection](connection.html) with the land. Rashi notes that [Avraham](avraham.html) builds this [first](one.html) altar in recognition and gratitude for receiving the news that he would have offspring and that they would be given the Land of Israel. *Ramban* adds that [Avraham](avraham.html) builds the altar in gratitude for receiving a clearer form of prophecy, a vision, now that he is in the Land, than he had received when he was in Haran, where [HaShem](hashem.html) had appeared in a [dream](dreams.html) or through Divine inspiration. Clearly, Israel is the place where [Abram](avraham.html)’s contact with [HaShem](hashem.html) will be intensified.

This juxtaposition of the promise of the land with the giving of [seed](flower.html),[[33]](#footnote-33) forms the basis for [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s faith:

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 11:8-12*** *By faith* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country,* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html) *in* [*tabernacles*](succoth.html) *with* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *and* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] G-d. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive* [*seed*](flower.html)*, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of* [*one*](one.html)*, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html) *of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*



Mount Ebal (right), Mount Gerizim (left) and between them the town of Shechem. By David Roberts, 1842

The Arizal [taught](teacher.html) that the brit bein habetarim, the [covenant](covenant.html) between the parts, took place at Shechem, between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. This [covenant](covenant.html) was a “[Covenant](covenant.html) of [Fire](fire.html)“. Shechem is thus associated with [fire](fire.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 15:1-21*** *After these things the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *in a vision, saying,* [*Fear*](fear.html) *not,* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*: I [am] thy shield, [and] thy exceeding great reward. And* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *said, Lord* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house [is] this Eliezer of Damascus? And* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *said, Behold, to me thou hast given no* [*seed*](flower.html)*: and, lo,* [*one*](one.html) *born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *[came] unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and tell the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*, if thou be able to* [*number*](nchart.html) *them: and he said unto him, So shall thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *be. And he believed in* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to* [*inherit*](inherit.html) *it. And he said, Lord* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, whereby shall I* [*know*](daat.html) *that I shall* [*inherit*](inherit.html) *it? And he said unto him, Take me an* [*heifer*](heifer.html) *of* [*three*](three.html) *years old, and a she goat of* [*three*](three.html) *years old, and a ram of* [*three*](three.html) *years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece* [*one*](one.html) *against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses,* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *drove them away. And when the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *was going down, a deep* [*sleep*](mashal.html) *fell upon* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*,* [*Know*](daat.html) *of a surety that thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them* [*four*](four.html) *hundred years; And also that* [*nation*](nations.html)*, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the* [*fourth*](four.html)[*generation*](toldot.html) *they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites [is] not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *made a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *with* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, saying, Unto thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*

This “[Covenant](covenant.html) of [Fire](fire.html)“, the *brit bein habetarim,* which [HaShem](hashem.html) made with [Avraham](avraham.html) was the same place where Yehoshua led the Children of Israel when they came [out of Egypt](thebirth.html). It is the same place where the Children of Israel uttered the blessings and the curses in the days of Yehoshua.

This pasuk shows [HaShem](hashem.html), represented by the [fire](fire.html), passing between the parts of animals in the cutting of a [covenant](covenant.html). The most powerful image, in Torah, is the image of [HaShem](hashem.html) as [fire](fire.html):

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:24*** *For* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy G-d [is] a consuming* [*fire*](fire.html)*, [even] a jealous G-d.*

The Ramban states that: “Whatever happened to the Patriarchs is a portent for their [[future](future.html)] children.” He believed that all [events](feasts.html) mentioned in the Torah would affect [future](future.html) [generations](toldot.html). We can’t always understand the relationships, but the relations exist. For instance, since [Avraham](avraham.html) [first](one.html) came to the city of Shechem when he arrived in Canaan, the [first](one.html) destination of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) upon their entering Israel would also be Shechem. Remember this, that the actions of the Patriarchs are a potent prophecy for [future](future.html) [events](feasts.html).

[Yaaqov](israelja.html) Avinu[[34]](#footnote-34) (renamed “Israel”) also encamped at Shechem 184 years later. He purchased the land in Shechem and built an altar and named it “El-elohe-israel,” meaning “G-d, the G-d of Israel”. Here also [Yaaqov](israelja.html) dug a well for his many herds. This well is still there today.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 33:18-20*** *And* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and encamped in view of the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the children of* [*Chamor*](chamor.html)*, Shechem’s father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.*



Upon [Yaaqov](israelja.html)‘s return to the land of Israel from the house of Laban, the pasuk tells us that he, “encamped in view of the city” of Shechem[[35]](#footnote-35). The sages derive from the “encamping” of [Yaakov](israelja.html) that he performed the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of “eruv techumim” (He arrived on Friday afternoon). This activity involves setting boundaries within which [one](one.html) may [walk](walking.html) on [Shabbat](sabbath.html). Establishing boundaries implies that [one](one.html) is making an effort to separate oneself from something that exists around him, a way of life that exemplifies [Yaaqov](israelja.html).

Shechem is also the Biblical site at which Dina the daughter of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) was raped. Dina bore a daughter from the rape who was named Asenath. The righteous spark that was within Shechem ben [Chamor](chamor.html), was transferred to Asenath. Asenath subsequently became the wife of [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq.

After Dina was raped, the sons of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) schemed to have all the men of Shechem [circumcised](circumcz.html).[[36]](#footnote-36)

Years later, [Yaaqov](israelja.html) sent his seventeen year-old son, [Yosef](joseph.html), from Hebron to check on his brothers as they kept the flocks in Shechem[[37]](#footnote-37). After [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq arrived he discovered his brothers had moved on to the lush area of Dothan; so he went to find them[[38]](#footnote-38). His brothers, filled with hatred, sold [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq to some Ishmaelite traders who, [coming](coming.html) through the Dothan pass, were headed for Egypt:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:12-17*** *And his brethren went to feed their father’s flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq , Do not thy brethren feed [the flock] in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here [am I]. And he said to him, Go, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, [he was] wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, where they feed [their flocks]. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.*

[Yosef](joseph.html) also had the men of Egypt [circumcised](circumcz.html) and [Yosef](joseph.html) ultimately was buried in Shechem.

[Yosef](joseph.html) is associated with the Sefirah of Yesod, the place of the [Brit Mila](circumcz.html). Thus [Yosef](joseph.html) and [circumcision](circumcz.html) are intimately connected with Shechem.

As [Yosef](joseph.html) conquered sexual temptation in Egypt, so he is buried in Shechem to act as barrier to the promiscuity of Shechem ben [Chamor](chamor.html) ([Chamor](chamor.html) means [donkey](chamor.html)). Shechem is thus strategically positioned for a showdown in the [end of days](lastdays.html).

Why did Shimon and Levi totally destroy Shechem? They felt that [one](one.html) of their own flesh and [blood](body.html), their sister Dinah, was debased in a terrible manner. This violation could not go unpunished. They forgot [one](one.html) issue, however. While they were expressing their concern for their sister, they completely disregarded the fact that, in that same place, the individual they were persecuting, the [one](one.html) they were selling to a life of slavery and pain, was none other than their brother [Yosef](joseph.html)! If they had been so concerned for heir own flesh and [blood](body.html), why did they ignore [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s pleas? Where was their [compassion](jonah.html) and sense of justice when they were persecuting their own brother?

In Bereshit 35, [Yaaqov](israelja.html) has his family get rid of all their idols. The presence of these idols accounts for the ability of Shechem ben [Chamor](chamor.html) to [attack](attacks.html) the family of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) which was weakened by these idols.

After [Yaaqov](israelja.html) got rid of the idols, his protection returned:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 35:1-5*** *And G-d said unto* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *there: and make there an altar unto G-d, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the* [*face*](body.html) *of* [*Esau*](edom.html) *thy brother. Then* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *said unto his* [*household*](househld.html)*, and to all that [were] with him, Put away the strange G-ds that [are] among you, and be* [*clean*](purity.html)*, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto G-d, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *all the strange G-ds which [were] in their* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, and [all their] earrings which [were] in their* [*ears*](body.html)*; and* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *hid them under the oak which [was] by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of G-d was upon the cities that [were] round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*.*

Thus the idols were a source of disaster to the family of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) at Shechem.

Rashi writes that “idols” refers to the spoils from the city of Shechem. Did [Yaaqov](israelja.html)‘s sons actually have idols from Shechem in their possession? Surely not, said R’ David Soloveitchik shlita. However, whenever [one](one.html) meets evil, even if he meets it in battle and destroys it (as [Yaaqov](israelja.html)‘s sons did to Shechem), he is tainted by it. Thus [Yaaqov](israelja.html) said, “Discard the taint of the evil of Shechem which is in your midst”.[[39]](#footnote-39)

When [Yaaqov](israelja.html) Avinu died he handed Shechem down to his son [Yosef](joseph.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 48:21-22*** *And Israel said unto* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq, Behold, I die: but G-d shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*. Moreover I have given to thee* [*one*](one.html) *portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.*

[Yosef](joseph.html) requested that his [body](body.html) not be buried in Egypt, so his [body](body.html) was taken to Shechem for burial:

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 24:32*** *And the bones of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq, which the children of Israel brought up* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the* [*inheritance*](inherit.html) *of the children of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq.*

[**Yosef**](joseph.html) **HaTsadiq**

Had [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s brothers seen the miracle that had happened for [Yosef](joseph.html) in the pit, then perhaps they would have reconsidered their judgment. After all, miracles do not happen for evil people, and it was an important [sign](signs.html) that [Heaven](heaven.html) did not share their view of their younger brother.

However, they had not noticed the miracle, and the [Talmud](orallaw.html) does not say why. Nevertheless, perhaps, the [Talmud](orallaw.html) alludes to the answer since the above citation follows this *halachah*:

[***Shabbat***](sabbath.html) ***22a*** *Rav Kahana said: Rav Nachman bar Munyumi elucidated in the* [*name*](name.html) *of Rebi Tanchum: A* [*Chanukah*](chanukah.html) *light placed higher than*[***twenty***](twenty.html) *amot is unfit, just like [the roof of a]* [*succah*](succoth.html) *and [an eruv in] an alleyway.*

The eye does not see well higher than [twenty](twenty.html) *amot* and therefore there is no proclamation of the miracle.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The point of the [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) candles that we light throughout the [eight](eight.html) days of [Chanukah](chanukah.html), explainsRashi, is to proclaim the miracle that happened for the Chashmoniam when they conquered the Greek army (in the [thirty-six](thirtysix.html)th century from [creation](bara.html)) against all odds. As well, it reminds us of how the miracle extended to the [Temple](temple.html) Menorah, which burned for [eight](eight.html) days using oil that should have become consumed after only [one](one.html) day. To remember this, [one](one.html) has to see the [Chanukah](chanukah.html) lights burning, which is difficult to do from a distance of [twenty](twenty.html)amot or more.

The question is, why not just use a larger flame? Or, what happens for a person whose vision is not good past [ten](ten.html) amot?

For this reason and others, the [number](nchart.html) [twenty](twenty.html) represents more than just a [physical](physical.html) limitation. In fact, it refers to a [spiritual](physical.html) limitation, perhaps the same kind that prevented [Yosef](joseph.html)’s brothers from recognizing the Divine [hand](fourteen.html) in [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s [redemption](redemption.html). For, the miracles did not stop once [Yosef](joseph.html) was drawn from the pit:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:25*** *They (the brothers) sat down to* [*eat*](eating.html) *bread when they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites* [*coming*](coming.html) *from Gilead. Their camels were carrying spices, balsam and lotus on their way down to Egypt.*

Why did thepasuk make [known](daat.html) what they (the Arabs) were transporting? To show you the reward of the righteous; for, normally the Arabs transported tar and naphtha whose smells are bad; for this [one](one.html) ([Yosef](joseph.html)), spices were arranged, to [save](salvation.html) him from the bad smell.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Another miracle, albeit a subtle [one](one.html), but a miracle nevertheless, and another indication that [Heaven](heaven.html) was on [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s side. Nevertheless, the brothers did not see it that way, and even imposed an oath on [HaShem](hashem.html), so to [speak](mashal.html), to prevent Him from revealing to [Yaaqov](israelja.html) what they had done to his favorite son.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Fascinatingly enough, the verse says:

***Bereshit 37:28*** *Midianite traders passed by; they pulled* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *out from the pit. They sold* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *to the Ishmaelites for*[***twenty***](twenty.html)*[pieces of] silver.*

Seemingly, this provided yet another allusion to the intellectual and [spiritual](physical.html) blindness that prevented [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s brothers from seeing his true greatness, and the depth of the mistake they were making in selling him. And, rather than reveal the [hand](fourteen.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) in history, the brothers hid it.

[***Sotah***](hair.html) ***13b*** *‘This* [*one*](one.html) *[*[*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq ] fulfilled all that was written in the other’. But if Moses had not occupied himself with him, would not the Israelites have occupied themselves with him? Behold, it is written: And the bones of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq which the children of Israel brought up* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html) *buried they in Shechem! Furthermore, if the Israelites had not occupied themselves with him, would not his own sons have done so? And, behold, it is written: And they became the* [*inheritance*](inherit.html) *of the children of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq ! — They said [to* [*one*](one.html) *another], ‘Leave him; his honour will be greater [when the burial is performed] by many rather than by few’; and they also said: ‘Leave him; his honour will be greater [when the burial is performed] by the great rather than by the small’.*

*Buried they in Shechem. Why just in Shechem? — R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: From Shechem they stole him, and to Shechem we will restore what is lost. The following verses are contradictory: it is written: And Moses took the bones of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq with him, and it is written: And the bones of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq which the children of Israel brought up etc.! — R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: Whoever performs a task without finishing it and another comes and completes it, Scripture ascribes it to the* [*one*](one.html) *who completed it as though he had performed it.*

**An Astonishing** [**Midrash**](orallaw.html)

By Shlomo Katz

The students asked the Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi,[[43]](#footnote-43) “Why was [Yosef](joseph.html) buried in Shechem”?

Rebbi responded, “Since he was kidnapped from Shechem, they returned him to Shechem”.

The students refused to accept this answer until Rebbi showed them the verse in which [Yosef](joseph.html) said, “You must bring my bones up with you”.

R’ Yehonatan Eyebschutz z”l explains: The halachah is that a thief must return the object which he stole. If the object no longer exists or no longer exists in its original form, the thief cannot return it and he cannot achieve full [atonement](atonemen.html). This was the objection raised by Rebbi’s students: Since [Yosef](joseph.html) was taken from Shechem as a living person and was returned as a corpse, how can that be considered to be a true return?

The answer is as follows: The halachah also provides that even if the stolen object is changed, so long as it has the same [name](name.html) in its original and present forms, the thief can return it for full [atonement](atonemen.html). Thus Rebbi answered, “Even in [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s lifetime he referred to himself (in the quoted verse) as ‘bones’. Therefore, when his [body](body.html) was returned to Shechem, it is as if the stolen object was returned”.[[44]](#footnote-44)

**Yehoshua**

After [forty](forty.html) years of encampments in a barren wilderness, Yehoshua led the Children of Israel into a land flowing with milk and honey. A land where a single cluster of grapes required [eight](eight.html) men to carry it.

The people were making a transition from [idolatry](idolatry.html) to holiness that was as dramatic as their transition from the wilderness to the land flowing with milk and honey. The Children of Israel were retracing the steps of their father [Avraham](avraham.html). As [Avraham](avraham.html) had grown up in a [household](househld.html) steeped in [idolatry](idolatry.html), so the children of Israel had grown up in Egypt, a place of intense [idolatry](idolatry.html). As [Avraham](avraham.html) wandered, not knowing his ultimate destination, so the Children of Israel wandered without knowing their ultimate destination.

The innate holiness of the land was reflected in its extraordinary productivity. Because of this holiness, [HaShem](hashem.html) sent the people [first](one.html) to Shechem to appreciate the dramatic border that they had just crossed.

The people [knew](daat.html) of the ancient “[Covenant](covenant.html) of [Fire](fire.html)” that [HaShem](hashem.html) had made with their father [Avraham](avraham.html) in this very spot. They [knew](daat.html) that this was the place where their [exile](galuyot.html) had begun and where [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s [exile](galuyot.html) had ended. They also [knew](daat.html) that their father [Yaaqov](israelja.html) had ended his [exile](galuyot.html) at this very place. This poignancy was not lost on the Children of Israel.

Now that their [exile](galuyot.html) had ended, at the place where it began, [HaShem](hashem.html) wanted to make them aware of the tremendous [journey](stages.html) that they had been through. [HaShem](hashem.html) wanted them to appreciate the fact that their lives in this land were dependent on their holiness. Thus [HaShem](hashem.html) took them to this powerful place and reminded them that their very lives depended on holiness.

The “Blessings and Curses” on Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, were spoken with Shechem directly between the [two](two.html) mountains. This pasuk clearly states that Shechem is the place where the Children of Israel received their [connection](connection.html) to the Promised Land:

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 24:25*** *So Joshua made a* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.*

Shortly after stepping [foot](heel.html) on the soil of the Holy Land, the Children of Israel miraculously found themselves [standing](mashal.html) before mount Gerizim and mount Ebal, a pair of mountains bordering on the city of Shechem to the west and the [east](east.html), respectively. There, they were commanded to perform a unique “swearing-in ceremony” in which they accepted upon themselves all of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of the Torah. Although the Torah only provides a broad description of what was to transpire, the [Mishna](orallaw.html) describes it in full detail:

[***Sotah***](hair.html) ***32a*** *HOW WERE THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES [PRONOUNCED]? WHEN ISRAEL CROSSED THE* [*JORDAN*](stages.html) *AND CAME TO MOUNT GERIZIM AND MOUNT EBAL WHICH ARE BY SAMARIA, (THIS IS IN THE VICINITY OF SHECHEM WHICH IS IN THE VICINITY OF THE TEREBINTHS OF MOREH, AND IT IS SAID, ARE THEY NOT BEYOND* [*JORDAN*](stages.html) *ETC. AND ELSEWHERE IT STATES, AND* [*ABRAM*](avraham.html) *PASSED THROUGH THE LAND UNTO THE PLACE OF SHECHEM UNTO THE TEREBINTH OF MOREH; AS THE TEREBINTH OF MOREH MENTIONED IN THIS LATTER VERSE IS SHECHEM, SO THE TEREBINTH OF MOREH MENTIONED IN THE FORMER VERSE IS SHECHEM.)*

When The Children of Israel went up to mount Ebal and mount Gerizim,[[45]](#footnote-45) they were separated by the city of Shechem in the valley below.

The blessings and curses uttered upon our entrance into Eretz Israel at mount Ebal and mount Gerizim, emphasize the fact that our [first](one.html) encounter with Eretz Israel must set the foundation for our [future](future.html) settlement of the land. This required an intense awareness of our duties and responsibilities.

The [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[46]](#footnote-46) tells us that the [covenant](covenant.html) on Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal was made in a miraculous fashion **on the day of entering the Land:** “Come and see how many miracles were done on that day, they crossed the [Jordan](stages.html) and came to Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, more than sixty miles, and no-[one](one.html) could stand on their way. Anyone who tried to interrupt them was seized with panic, and then they brought the stones and built the altar, and wrote the Torah in [seventy](seventy.html) [tongues](spirit.html) on them... **and praised and cursed** and took the stones and came to [sleep](mashal.html) in the Gilgal”.

Shechem clearly and decisively signifies the fact that the Torah is an absolute [covenant](covenant.html), not only between [HaShem](hashem.html) and His people but an eternal [covenant](covenant.html) between the [nation](nations.html) and its land with the Torah carved in it and spread over the whole span of life.

Here, on top of Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, we accepted the fact that the blessing of the land is realized just as much as we are worthy of living on it and use it according to its unique [spiritual](physical.html) nature: The land of Life and the place of Devine Presence.



Joshua designate Shechem as a [city of refuge](elul.html):

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 20:7*** *And they* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which [is] Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.*

**Later** [**Events**](feasts.html)

During the [time](time.html) of the judges, Avimelech, a son of Gideon, conspired with his maternal family to kill all other sons of Gideon and have himself proclaimed king of Shechem:

***Shoftim (Judges) 9:6*** *And all the men of Shechem* [*gathered*](gather.html) *together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Avimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that [was] in Shechem.*

But Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, escaped by hiding. And at Avimelech coronation, Jotham climbed Mount Gerizim and shouted a curse on Shechem for Avimelech [sin](sin.html). This curse proved true, for the citizens of Shechem formed a conspiracy against Avimelech, and he completely destroyed the city. But when Avimelech went to Thebez and stormed the tower, a woman dropped an upper millstone on his [head](body.html) and cracked his skull.

After the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, “went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king”:

***I Melachim (Kings) 12:1*** *And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.*

But because Rehoboam followed the foolish and harsh advice of the youths with whom he grew up, the [nation](nations.html) divided at Shechem. Jeroboam, the leader of those who wanted Rehoboam to show mercy, decided to separate from Rehoboam and form a separate [nation](nations.html). King Jeroboam selected Shechem for his capital:

***2 Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 10:1*** *And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.*

In the end, this was the beginning of a terrible split between Israel and Judah. Jeroboam shouted: “To your tents, O Israel” and separated the [ten](ten.html) northern [tribes](tribes.html) from the [two](two.html) [tribes](tribes.html) of the southern kingdom of Judah (1 Melachim 12:1-16).

[***Sotah***](hair.html) ***11a*** *Shechem is a place set aside for punishment; the* [*Tribes*](tribes.html) *were “damaged” there; Dinah was violated there, and there the Kingdom of David divided.*

[**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **ben** [**Yosef**](joseph.html)

Now lets look at [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) as He went to the Galil and to Shechem:

[***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, VaYakhel 220a*** *Rebi Shimon said ... The land of Galil is where Melech* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *will be revealed, because it is in the territory of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)*. It was destroyed* [*first*](one.html)*, and it is the place where he will* [*first*](one.html) *be revealed from all the places, before spreading to the* [*nations*](nations.html) *... as it says:*

***Yehoshua 24:32*** *“And the bones of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *which they brought up* [*from Egypt*](thebirth.html) *for burial in Shechem.”*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) indicates that the meaning of the pasuk in Yehoshua pertains to [Mashiach](mashiach.html). So when we see the [sod](sod.html) level (the same as the [Zohar](orallaw.html)) [gospel](mishna1.html) showing [His Majesty](yeshua.html) in the Galil, it is what we would expect:

***Yochanan (John) 4:5-7*** *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *gave to his son* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq. Now* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*‘s well was there.* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *therefore, being wearied with [his]* [*journey*](stages.html)*, sat thus on the well: [and] it was about the* [*sixth*](six.html) *hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *saith unto her, Give me to drink.*

Because, when you think about it, all that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) boils down to, in the end, is helping [Yaaqov](israelja.html) leave behind all connections to [Esav](edom.html) once and for all, so that he can finally take his right place in history as Israel. Obliteration of evil, identified only with the Days of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is synonymous with the cleansing of all traces of [Esav](edom.html) within the [heart](body.html) of every [Jew](gen-jew.html). It is also what the [Talmud](orallaw.html) refers to as the “slaughtering of the yetzer hara” in [Mashiach](mashiach.html)‘s day.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Then, when this finally happens, there will be no curses, only blessings to be enjoyed forever. Then, Shechem will no longer be a place set aside for punishment, but as a place for reward. However, not for [Yaaqov](israelja.html) the twin brother of [Esav](edom.html), but for Israel, and it will be a well-deserved reward for every [Jew](gen-jew.html) who will have “fought with a divine being and with man” and will have won.

The Sages have indicated that there is a [connection](connection.html) between the Sefirot, the days of [creation](bara.html) (and its associated [millennium](millenium.html)), and our Patriarchs. The following chart illustrates these connections and shows that we live in [Yosef](joseph.html)’s [millennium](millenium.html) (October 2007 A.D. is [Tishri](feasts.html) 5768 A.M.):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [**Hebrew**](hebrew.html) | **English** | **Year** | **Ish** |
| *Chesed* | “kindness” | 0 to 1000 | [Abraham](avraham.html)  |
| *Gevurah* | “power/strength” | 1001 to 2000 | [Isaac](isaac.html)  |
| *Tiferet* | “beauty/harmony” | 2001 to 3000 | [Yaaqov](israelja.html)  |
| *Netzach* | “dominance/victory” | 3001 to 4000 | Moses  |
| *Hod* | “glory” | 4001 to 5000 | Aaron  |
| *Yesod* | “foundation” | 5001 to 6000 | [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq  |

We are now in the year 5768 (from [creation](bara.html)); therefore we are also in the [sixth](six.html) [millennium](millenium.html), the [one](one.html) that is [spiritually](physical.html) “powered” by the *Sefirah* called *Yesod,* the [one](one.html) that corresponds to [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq .

\* \* \*

On Sunday, Oct. 8, 2000 / Tishre 9, 5761, a gang of Arabs ransacked, burned, and took possession of Kever [Yosef](joseph.html). This [connection](connection.html) point is no longer in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [hands](fourteen.html).

Providentially, Shechem was turned over to Palestinian rule December 12, 1995, Parashat Vayaishev, the Parasha in which [Yosef](joseph.html) was sold in Shechem. In fact, the Sunday of that week, Israeli soldiers fought with students attending the Yeshiva located at [Yosef](joseph.html)‘s burial tomb, the same Yeshiva that was destroyed by Palestinians in their most recent uprising when they also destroyed the tomb of [Yosef](joseph.html) as well.

Shechem is such a bad place for [Jews](gen-jew.html) that it has been called a “place ready for punishment”.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Finally, since Shechem was the [first](one.html) city for [Avraham](avraham.html), so it will be the [first](one.html) city in the days of [Mashiach](mashiach.html):

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemot, Section 2, Page 220a*** *Said R. Simeon: ‘At the* [*time*](time.html) *when the dead will be awakened and be in readiness for the* [*resurrection*](techiyat.html) *in the Holy Land, legions upon legions will arise on the soil of Galilee, as it is there that the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *is destined to reveal himself. For that is the portion of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq, and it was the* [*first*](one.html) *part of the Holy Land to be destroyed, and it was thence that the* [*exile*](galuyot.html) *of Israel and their dispersion among the* [*nations*](nations.html) *began, as Scripture says, “but they are not grieved for the hurt of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq “ (Amos VI, 6). Thus there they will rise up* [*first*](one.html)*, for the reason that it is the portion of him who was put in an* [*ark*](ark.html)*, as it says, “and he was put in an* [*ark*](ark.html) *in Egypt”(Gen. L, 26), and subsequently was buried in the Holy Land, as it says “And the bones of* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq, which the children of Israel brought up* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, buried they in Shechem” (Jos. XXIV, 32); and he it was who kept the* [*purity*](purity.html) *of the holy* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *symbol in a special degree. As soon as they will rise from the dead all those hosts will march, each man to the portion of his ancestors, as Scripture says, “and ye shall return every man unto his possession” (Lev. xxv, 10).*

CONCLUSION:

Shechem = A promise by [HaShem](hashem.html) to give [Avraham](avraham.html) and his [seed](flower.html) the land of Israel.

This infers that our possession of Shechem is an indication of our possession of the entire Land of Israel as promised to [Avraham](avraham.html).

## Hebron - *חברון*



**Ma’arat HaMachpelah**

**Machpelah (Hebron)** – The eternal contact point of our people to our [fathers](fathers.html), our people, of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) soul. Machpelah means “The Doubled [One](one.html)“ and was understood to be a double cave. Some say it was a cave within a cave, while others say it was a cave above a cave.

Anatomically, Machpelah is situated at the place of *yesod*, foundation, vis-à-vis the land of Israel. The following illustration should help us understand this strange cave:



This portion of the [female](male%2Bfemale.html) anatomy illustrates the idea of cave within a cave and also a cave above a cave. When a woman is [lying down](mashal.html), it is a cave within a cave. When she is [standing](mashal.html) up, then it is a cave above a cave. Curiously, a [*womb*](thebirth.html) and a *grave* are both called a ‘kever’, because they are both a portal to another [world](worlds.html).

In the area between the bottom of the torso and the belt, the [womb](thebirth.html) is precisely in the center. The [womb](thebirth.html) is the point of origin for all [new](new.html) life. It is the point of [*connection*](connection.html) between this [world](worlds.html) and the next [world](worlds.html).

Kiryat Arba = Hebron (from *hibur* = [*connection*](connection.html)*,* because there the spirit [connects](connection.html) with the [body](body.html), the upper [world](worlds.html) with the lower.). Some say that the [name](name.html) Hebron means friendship. Hebron is the [first](one.html) location in Eretz Israel to be purchased.

Hebron is located approximately [twenty](twenty.html) miles southwest of Yerushalayim and lies about 3,000 [feet](heel.html) above sea level.

The [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[49]](#footnote-49) writes that Hebron is the rockiest place in Eretz Israel, which is the reason it was singled out as a place fit for burial. On the simplest level we can understand that as a place that could not be used agriculturally, Hebron was an ideal cemetery. However, the [Gemara](orallaw.html)‘s comment can also explain how the [body](body.html) and soul, the lower and upper [worlds](worlds.html), are joined in Hebron. Hebron is a place that does not support life, in a sense, removed from the material. As such, the [body](body.html) and soul of [one](one.html) who identifies with Hebron are closer together, serving a single purpose and leading a single life, the life of the spirit. In a place were material goals cannot be met, only those with [spiritual](physical.html) goals will [dwell](dwelling.html), making Hebron a [spiritual](physical.html) place, a joining of the lower [world](worlds.html) with the upper. Hebron is therefore a place of burial, a place to come to when the [four](four.html) elements re-separate, for even in life, it is a place close to death.

[***Sotah***](hair.html) ***34b*** *Now Hebron was built* [*seven*](seven.html) *years — what means ‘was built’? If I say that it means actually built, is it possible that a man constructs a house for his younger son before his elder son; as it is written: And the sons of Ham: Cush and Mitzrayim? But [the intention is], it was* [*seven*](seven.html) *times more productive than Zoan. There is no worse stony ground in all the land of Israel than Hebron, and that is why they bury the dead there; and there is none among all the countries superior to the land of Egypt, as it is said: Like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt; and there is no place superior to Zoan In all the land Egypt, as it is written: For his princes are at Zoan. Nevertheless Hebron was* [*seven*](seven.html) *times more productive than Zoan. But was Hebron stony ground; behold it is written: And it came to pass at the end of* [*forty*](forty.html) *years, that Absalom said unto the king, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, let me go [and pay my vow . . . in Hebron]; and R. Iwya — another version is, Rabbah b. Bar Hanan-said: He went to fetch lambs from Hebron; and there is also a* [*teaching*](teacher.html)*: [The best] rams are from* [*Moab*](stages.html) *and lambs from Hebron! — From that very fact [it is proved that the land was stony]; because the soil is thin it produces pastures and the cattle grow fat there.*

The [name](name.html) Hebron speaks of a [connection](connection.html). Burial in Hebron represents a [connection](connection.html) to the living even in death. The essence of an ancestor is the fact that he has children. Everything a child is finds its basis in his parent. The link continues from [generation](toldot.html) to [generation](toldot.html), such that every descendent owes his entire being to all those who came before. The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people as they are today, and will be tomorrow, stand on the foundation laid by [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah, [Isaac](isaac.html) and Rivka, [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and Leah.

Hebron is also a place of life according to the [Zohar](orallaw.html) it is the entrance to the [Garden of Eden](eden.html):

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 127a*** *R. Judah said: ‘*[*Abraham*](avraham.html) *recognized the cave of Machpelah by a certain mark, and he had long set his mind and* [*heart*](body.html) *on it. For he had once entered that cave and seen* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve buried there. He* [*knew*](daat.html) *that they were* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve because he saw the form of a man, and whilst he was gazing a door opened into the* [*Garden of Eden*](eden.html)*, and he perceived the same form* [*standing*](mashal.html) *near it. Now, whoever looks at the form of* [*Adam*](adam.html) *cannot escape death. For when a man is about to pass out of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *he catches sight of* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and at that moment he dies.* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, however, did look at him, and saw his form and yet survived. He saw, moreover, a shining light that illumined the cave, and a lamp burning.* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *then coveted that cave for his burial place, and his mind and* [*heart*](body.html) *were set upon it. Observe now with what tact* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *made his request for a burial place for Sarah. He did not ask at* [*first*](one.html) *for the cave, neither did he indicate any* [*desire*](needs.html) *to separate himself from the people of the land, but simply said: GIVE ME A POSSESSION OF A BURYING PLACE WITH YOU, THAT I MAY BURY MY DEAD OUT OF SIGHT. Although he addressed himself to the sons of Heth, we cannot suppose that Ephron was not present then, since it says: Now EPHRON WAS* [*SITTING*](mashal.html) *IN THE MIDST OF THE CHILDREN OF HETH.* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, however, did not at* [*first*](one.html) *say anything to him, but* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *only to them, as it says: AND HE* [*SPOKE*](mashal.html) *TO THE CHILDREN OF HETH, ETC. Now it cannot be imagined that* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *wished to be buried among them, among the impure, or that he desired to mix with them. But* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *acted tactfully, giving a lesson to the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. Though his whole* [*desire*](needs.html) *was centered on that cave, he did not ask for it forthwith, but asked for something else of which he had no need, and he addressed his request to the others, not to Ephron himself. It was only after they said to him in the presence of Ephron: “Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us, etc.” that he said, “hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of* [*Zohar*](orallaw.html)*, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, etc.”* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *as much as said: Do not think that I wish to separate from you as being superior to you. No, in the midst of you I* [*desire*](needs.html) *to be buried, for as I am fond of you I do not wish to keep aloof from you.’*

*R. Eleazar said: ‘*[*Abraham*](avraham.html) *came to enter the cave in this way. He was running after that calf of which we read, “and* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf” (Gen. XVIII, 7), and the calf ran until it entered a cave, and then* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *entered after it and saw what we have described. Further,* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *used to offer up his* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *daily, and in so doing used to proceed as far as that field, which emitted heavenly odors. Whilst there he saw a light issuing from the cave, so that he* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *on that spot, and on that spot the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *communed with him. On that account* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *now asked for it, having always longed for it since then. Why did not he ask for it before that* [*time*](time.html)*? Because the people would not have listened to him, as he had no obvious need for it. Now that he needed it, he thought it was* [*time*](time.html) *to demand it. Observe that had Ephron seen inside the cave what* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *saw, he would never have sold it to him. But he never saw there anything, since such things are never revealed except to their rightful owner. It was thus revealed to* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *and not to Ephron: to* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, who was its rightful owner, but not to Ephron, his wife, to wit, after* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *had taken upon himself this obligation.* [*Adam*](adam.html) *then returned to his place, but not Eve, until* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *came and placed her beside* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, who received her for his sake. Hence the text says, AND AFTER THIS,* [*ABRAHAM*](avraham.html) *BURIED (eth) SARAH HIS WIFE: the augmenting particle eth indicates that the burial included, as it were, Eve. Thus they were all settled in their proper places. Hence the Scripture says, “These are the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth when they were created (b’hibar’am)” (Gen. II, 4), which according to tradition, means “on account of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*“ (b’*[*Abraham*](avraham.html)*). Now “the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *of the* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and the earth” can only be* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve, they having been the direct issue of the* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth and not of human parents, and it was they who became established through* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*: before* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*,* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve were not established in their places in the other* [*world*](worlds.html)*.’*

*R. Eleazar asked his father, R. Simeon, for an explanation of the term Machpelah (lit. “twofold”, or “folded”). ‘How is it,’ he said, ‘that* [*first*](one.html) *it is written “the cave of Machpelah”, and subsequently “the cave of the field of Machpelah”, implying that the field and not the cave was “Machpelah” (doubled)?’ R. Simeon replied: ‘The term Machpelah belongs properly neither to the cave nor to the field, but to something else with which both were connected. The cave belongs to the field, and the field to something else. For the whole of the Land of Israel and of Jerusalem is folded up beneath it, since it exists both above and below, in the same way as there is a Jerusalem both above and below, both of the same pattern. The Jerusalem above has a twofold attachment, above and below; similarly the Jerusalem below is linked to* [*two*](two.html) *sides, higher and lower. Hence it is folded in* [*two*](two.html)*; and that field partakes of the same character, seeing that it is therein situated. The same reference is contained in the passage, “as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed” (Gen. XXVII, 27), to wit, both above and below. Hence its* [*name*](name.html)*, “field of folding”, but not “folded field”. Further, the esoteric implication of the term Machpelah relates it to the Divine* [*Name*](name.html)*, in which the* [*letter*](letters.html) *He is doubled, though both are as* [*one*](one.html)*. It is, indeed, true that the cave was a twofold* [*one*](one.html)*, a cave within a cave, yet the* [*name*](name.html) *“cave of the field of Machpelah” has a different connotation, as already explained.* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, on his part, who* [*knew*](daat.html) *its true character, in* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *to the children of Heth called it simply “cave of Machpelah”, as if to imply merely “double cave”, which it also was in fact. Scripture, however, describes it as “the cave of the field of Machpelah”, this being its true description. For the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *has disposed all things in such a way that everything in this* [*world*](worlds.html) *should be a replica of something in the* [*world*](worlds.html) *above, and that the* [*two*](two.html) *should be united so that His glory should be spread above and below. Happy the portion of the righteous in whom the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *finds pleasure both in this* [*world*](worlds.html) *and in the* [*world*](futures.html) *to come!’*

Thus Hebron replaced [Gan Eden](eden.html). In place of individual immortality came the immortality of a [connection](connection.html) with the [future](future.html), an immortality of the whole. Hebron is the place where the [body](body.html) and spirit join. Though the [body](body.html) dies, as long as the spirit, the ideas and values passed on to the next [generation](toldot.html), endures, the man is still alive.

Hebron is the place where the lower and upper [worlds](worlds.html) join; the infusion of holy purpose into [future](future.html) [generations](toldot.html) unites them. The [creation](bara.html) of life in the lower [world](worlds.html), and the living of life in the lower [world](worlds.html) with an eye to both past and [future](future.html), are together our means of [spiritual](physical.html) fulfillment. They are the guarantee of our ultimate purpose.

It is for this reason that Hebron is considered the [spiritual](physical.html) entry point into Eretz Israel.[[50]](#footnote-50)

The [first](one.html) use of the word *Hebron* in the Torah is found in Bereshit 13. This [first](one.html) use of *Hebron* juxtaposes the giving of [seed](flower.html) with the possession of the land of Israel. **The difference is that this passage specifically promises the land to** [**Avraham**](avraham.html) **– not his** [**seed**](flower.html)**!**

***Bereshit (Genesis) 13:14-18*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine* [*eyes*](body.html)*, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *for ever. And I will make thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *as the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the earth: so that if a man can* [*number*](nchart.html) *the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the earth, [then] shall thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *also be numbered. Arise,* [*walk*](walking.html) *through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *removed [his] tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which [is] in Hebron, and built there an altar unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

From this we derive that Hebron is our [connection](connection.html) to [Avraham](avraham.html) and by extension, to the patriarchs and to [Adam](adam.html). Hebron is our [connection](connection.html) to our forefathers.

Shortly after [Avraham](avraham.html) reached the Promised Land, before he bought Machpelah, whilst Sarah is still alive. He built an altar in Hebron.

Later the Torah describes in painstaking detail how [Avraham](avraham.html) requests to buy the grave site at Machpelah, how the Hittites wish him to take it for free, and. when Ephron the Hittite finally agrees to make it a purchase, he charges [Avraham](avraham.html) the inflated and outlandish sum of [four](four.html) hundred silver shekels.

(In an extraordinary piece of arithmetic computation, the Arugat Ha-bosem proves that 400 shekel, the price of this grave site, was enough to buy 2.4 million square amot, based on the price of land given in Vayikra 27:16. In other words, there is [four](four.html) cubits, “daled amot” for 600,000 [Jews](gen-jew.html).)

Why expend so much ink and parchment, the entire chapter 23 of the Book of Bereshit, over a Middle-[Eastern](east.html) souk sale? Moreover, what is the significance in the fact that the very [first](one.html) parcel of land in Israel acquired by a [Jew](gen-jew.html) happens to be a grave-site?

This cave was purchased by [Avraham](avraham.html) Avinu as a grave for Sarah. Eventually, [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) and Rivka, and [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and Leah were buried in this doubled cave.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 49:28-33*** *And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be* [*gathered*](gather.html) *unto my people: bury me with my* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *in the cave that [is] in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that [is] in the field of Machpelah, which [is] before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *and Sarah his wife; there they buried* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that [is] therein [was] from the children of Heth. And when* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *had made an end of commanding his sons, he* [*gathered*](gather.html) *up his* [*feet*](heel.html) *into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was* [*gathered*](gather.html) *unto his people.*

Why did [Avraham](avraham.html) have to purchase Sarah’s gravesite? Why had he not purchased land during the nearly sixty years that he and Sarah had sojourned in the land?

[Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah are semi-nomadic herdsmen because, notwithstanding Divine promises to the contrary, there is as of yet no [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [nation](nations.html) to settle the land. While associated with Canaan, their direct [connection](connection.html) to the land is tenuous and fragile, because [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah personify the earliest [stages](stages.html) of a [new](new.html) [nation](nations.html) being born. Only [one](one.html) thing anchors them to this place, and that is the word of [HaShem](hashem.html). Actual possession and settlement, the true possibility of a national destiny being realized, is for them far off in the [future](future.html). For now, the land is firmly in the [hands](fourteen.html) of the indigenous inhabitants, the Canaanites.

This trial is indeed a difficult trial. [Avraham](avraham.html) must wait till the death of Sarah before he acquires his [first](one.html) piece of the land.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 23:4*** *I [am] a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.*

A piece of land that serves as a family crypt is perhaps the strongest notion of being linked to a place that human beings recognize.

The family sepulcher expresses in very tangible form the intense [connection](connection.html) to a land, a clan, and even a way of life. To be buried in a place is to be part of that place. What [Avraham](avraham.html) seeks to establish is not simply a cemetery, but rather an undisputed and irreversible foothold in the land of Canaan.

There is an interesting mystical aspect to the purchase of this fantastic cave. The Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that the Aishet Chayil, the woman of valor in Mishlei (Proverbs) 31, was Sarah! They say that the “field” she considered and purchased was Ma’arat HaMachpelah! Of course this presents a massive problem in that the Torah spends most of a chapter showing us that [Avraham](avraham.html) bought Ma’arat HaMachpelah. So how can the Sages attribute this to Sarah Imeinu? The Sages understood that Sarah was alive even whilst she was dead. Somehow she and [Avraham](avraham.html) had become so united that she was still with him when he acted as her vehicle to purchase the cave. Thus it is called Ma’arat HaMachpelah, the cave of doubles. [One](one.html) of the pairs, [one](one.html) of the doubles was [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah.

According to our Sages, [Adam](adam.html) and Chava are also buried at Machpelah, which was excavated by [Adam](adam.html):

***Eiruvin 53a*** *The cave of Machpelah. Rab and Samuel differ as to its meaning.* [*One*](one.html) *holds that the cave consisted of* [*two*](two.html) *chambers* [*one*](one.html) *within the other; and the other holds that it consisted of a lower and upper chamber. According to him who holds that the chambers were* [*one*](one.html) *above the other the term Machpelah is well justified but according to him who holds that it consisted of* [*two*](two.html) *chambers* [*one*](one.html) *within the other, what could be the meaning of Machpelah? That it had multiples of couples.*

Mamre the city of Arba. R. [Isaac](isaac.html) explained: The city of the [four](four.html) couples: [Adam](adam.html) and Eve, [Abraham](avraham.html) and Sarah, [Isaac](isaac.html) and Rivka, [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and Leah.

[***Sotah***](hair.html) ***13a*** *And there they lamented with a very great and sore lamentation. It has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: Even the horses and asses [joined in the lamentation]. When [the cortege] arrived at the Cave of Machpelah,* [*Esau*](edom.html) *came and wished to prevent [the interment there], saying to them, Mamre, Kiriath-arba, the same is Hebron — now R.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *has said: Kiriath-arba [is so called] because* [*four*](four.html) *couples [were buried there], viz.* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve,* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *and Sarah,* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *and Rivka, and* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *and Leah — [*[*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*] had buried Leah in his portion and what remains belongs to me’. They replied to him, ‘Thou didst sell it’. He said to them, ‘Granted that I sold my* [*birth*](birth.html)*-right, but did I sell my plain heir’s right!’ They replied: ‘Yes, for it is written: In my grave which I [*[*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*] have digged for me’, and R. Johanan has said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Simeon b. Jehozadak: The word kirah [dig] means nothing else than ‘sale’ [mekirah], and thus in the coast-towns they use kirah as a term for ‘sale’. — He said to them, ‘Produce a document [of sale] for me’. They replied to him, ‘The document is in the land of Egypt. Who will go for it? Let Naphtali go, because he is swift as a hind’; for it is written: Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words — R. Abbahu said: Read not ‘goodly words’ [imre shefer] but imre sefer [words of a document]. Among those present was Hushim, a son of Dan, who was hard of* [*hearing*](mashal.html)*; so he asked them, ‘What is happening?’ They said to him, ‘[*[*Esau*](edom.html)*] is preventing [the burial] until Naphtali returns from the land of Egypt’. He retorted: ‘Is my grandfather to lie there in contempt until Naphtali returns from the land of Egypt!’ He took a club and struck [*[*Esau*](edom.html)*] on the* [*head*](body.html) *so that his* [*eyes*](body.html) *fell out and rolled to the* [*feet*](heel.html) *of* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*.* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *opened his* [*eyes*](body.html) *and laughed; and that is what is written: The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his* [*feet*](heel.html) *in the* [*blood*](body.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*. At that* [*time*](time.html) *was the prophecy of Rivka fulfilled, as it is written: Why should I be bereaved of you both in* [*one*](one.html) *day? Although the death of the* [*two*](two.html) *of them did not occur on the* [*one*](one.html) *day, still their burial took place on the same day. — But if* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTsadiq had not occupied himself with [*[*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*‘s burial], would not his brethren have occupied themselves with it? Behold it is written: For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan! — They said [among themselves], ‘Leave him [to conduct the interment]; for the honour [of our father] will be greater [when it is conducted] by kings than by commoners’.*

***Baba Bathra 58a*** *R. Bana’ah used to mark out caves [where there were dead* [*bodies*](body.html)*]. When he came to the cave of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, he found Eliezer the servant of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)[*standing*](mashal.html) *at the entrance. He said to him: What is* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *doing? He replied: He is* [*sleeping*](mashal.html) *in the* [*arms*](body.html) *of Sarah, and she is looking fondly at his* [*head*](body.html)*. He said: Go and tell him that Bana’ah is* [*standing*](mashal.html) *at the entrance. Said* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *to him: Let him enter; it is well* [*known*](daat.html) *that there is no passion in this* [*world*](worlds.html)*. So he went in, surveyed the cave, and came out again. When he came to the cave of* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, a voice came forth from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *saying Thou hast beholden the likeness of my likeness, my likeness itself thou mayest not behold. But, he said, I want to mark out the cave. The measurement of the inner* [*one*](one.html) *is the same as that of the outer* [*one*](one.html) *[came the answer]. (Those who hold that there was* [*one*](one.html) *chamber above another [say that the answer was], the measurement of the lower* [*one*](one.html) *is the same as that of the upper* [*one*](one.html)*.) R. Bana’ah said: I discerned his [*[*Adam*](adam.html)*‘s]* [*two*](two.html) *heels, and they were like* [*two*](two.html) *orbs of the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*. Compared with Sarah, all other people are like a* [*monkey*](mashal.html) *to a human being, and compared with Eve Sarah was like a* [*monkey*](mashal.html) *to a human being, and compared with* [*Adam*](adam.html) *Eve was like a* [*monkey*](mashal.html) *to a human being, and compared with the Shechinah* [*Adam*](adam.html) *was like a* [*monkey*](mashal.html) *to a human being. The beauty of R. Kahana was a reflection of [the beauty of Rab; the beauty of Rab was a reflection of] the beauty of R. Abbahu; the beauty of R. Abbahu was a reflection of the beauty of our father* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*, and the beauty of* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *was a reflection of the beauty of* [*Adam*](adam.html)*.*

Since [Adam](adam.html) and Eve were the [first](one.html) pair buried there, and therefore Hebron, where the cave was situated, bore the additional [name](name.html) of “Kiriath-arba”, “the city of [four](four.html)“; *i.e.*, of the tombs of [Adam](adam.html) and Eve, [Abraham](avraham.html) and Sarah, [Isaac](isaac.html) and Rivka, [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and Leah.[[51]](#footnote-51)

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LVIII:8*** *SO THE FIELD OF EPHRON... AROSE (XXIII, 17): it had been held in low esteem, and now it rose, for whereas it had belonged to a man of humble rank, it was now the property of a great man. WHICH WAS IN MACHPELAH: this* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that its value was doubled in the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of every person, for whoever was buried therein was assured that his reward was doubled and even trebled. R. Abbahu said: The* [*name*](name.html) *signifies that the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, bent* [*Adam*](adam.html) *double and buried him within it.*

After Lot separated from [Avraham](avraham.html), the second stage of [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s [connection](connection.html) to the Land is established (the altar at Shechem was the [first](one.html) stage), again embodied in the erecting of an altar:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 13:14-18*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said to Avram, after Lot separated from him, “Now lift up your* [*eyes*](body.html) *and look from the place where you are, northward and southward, and eastward and westward. For all the land that you see, to you will I give it, and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the earth, so that if* [*one*](one.html) *can count the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the earth, then your offspring shall also be counted. Arise, therefore, go about in the land, through the length of it and the breadth of it, for to you will I give it.” And Avram pitched his tents and came and dwelt in the groves of Mamre, which are in Chevron, and there he built an altar to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

**Melech David**

King David was anointed in Hebron, where he reigned for [seven](seven.html) years.

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 2:11*** *And the* [*time*](time.html) *that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was* [*seven*](seven.html) *years and* [*six*](six.html) *months.*

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) also speaks of this special cave at Machpelah:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemot, Section 2, Page 3Ia*** *(Num. XIV, 24). “Another spirit” signifies that Caleb separated himself from the other spies and went alone to Hebron in order to prostrate himself at the cave of Machpelah before the graves of the patriarchs; and Hebron was allotted to him as his* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, as it is written: “To him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon” (Deut. I, 36). And why was Hebron given to him? There is an esoteric reason for this, the same which also underlies David’s* [*connection*](connection.html) *with Hebron. For we find that when Saul died and David enquired of the Lord, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?”, the answer was that he should go up into Hebron (2 Sam. II, 1). Now, since Saul was dead and David already the rightful king, why did he not at once proclaim his rule over the whole land? Why was it necessary for him to go to Hebron and there become anointed as king over Judah only for* [*seven*](seven.html) *years, not being declared monarch over the whole of Israel till after the death of Ish-Bosheth? Truly, the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be His* [*Name*](name.html)*, had a deep purpose in this. The holy kingdom could not be fully established without* [*first*](one.html) *attaching itself to the patriarchs in Hebron. When that contact was established the kingdom was firmly erected with support from the* [*world*](worlds.html) *above, whose symbol, in David’s case, was “*[*seven*](seven.html) *years”.* [*Seven*](seven.html) *being the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of perfection* ([connection](connection.html))*, because it contains all. So when it is said of the* [*Temple*](temple.html)*, “And he built it* [*seven*](seven.html) *years”, the same perfection is suggested. Now, David desired to build the perfect kingdom here below as a counterpart of the Kingdom above; but before he could achieve his* [*desire*](needs.html) *he had to acquire power for the task by attaching himself to the patriarchs for “*[*seven*](seven.html)*“ years. Thus only was he enabled to establish his kingdom in perfection, in the fashion of the Kingdom of supernal light: a kingdom never to be shaken. And, guided by a similar inspiration, Caleb also went to Hebron.’*

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemot, Section 2, Page 39b*** *As they thus sat listening to the master’s expositions, they suddenly beheld smoke ascending and descending at a little distance, where there was a clearing in the wood. Said R. Simeon: ‘The ground has been heated by the light from above, and now this field emits an aroma of all spices, passing sweet. Let us remain here, for the Shechinah is present with us. It is “the smell of the field which the Lord hath blessed” (Gen. XXVII, 27).’ Presently he began to comment on this verse and referred to the tradition (cf.* [*Midrash*](orallaw.html)*, Rab., Gen., LXV, I8;* [*Zohar*](orallaw.html)*, Gen. 142b) that the “precious garments” which emitted a sweet odor when* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *appeared before* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *originally belonged to* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, and in* [*time*](time.html) *came into the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of Nimrod, “the mighty hunter”, and finally to* [*Esau*](edom.html)*, who was also a hunter. ‘It has been remarked’, he said, ‘that these garments were made by the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *Himself (Gen. III, 21), by the agency of both Divine Names, TETRAGRAMMATON and Elohim, which is more than can be said for* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth, which were created only by Elohim (Gen. I, 1). It is rather difficult to understand how they came to* [*Esau*](edom.html)*. For in the* [*first*](one.html) *place we are told that G-d made garments for Eve also (Ibid.), and what became of these? And surely* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve would have been buried in them and not abandoned such a precious gift. The truth is, however, that no other human being ever wore those garments, which placed* [*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve on a par with supernal beings. And as for the “goodly raiment” which Rivka put upon* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *(Gen. XXVII, I5), this was royal apparel of silk and gold, which it is usual to keep in perfumes, and this is what* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *smelt, and he said, “See the smell of my son” (Ibid. 27), because he* [*knew*](daat.html) *that the smell was so sweet on account of him. How, it may be asked, did* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)[*know*](daat.html) *of “the smell of the field which the Lord hath blessed” (Ibid.)? From* [*two*](two.html) *sources, which are essentially the same. It says, “and* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *went out to meditate in the field” (Gen. XXIV, 63). Why in the field? Did he not have a house or any other place in which to* [*pray*](prayer.html)*? The truth is that that field was actually the very* [*one*](one.html) *which* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *bought from the sons of Heth, that field which was near the cave of Machpelah; and when* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *passed it the Shechinah was present there and the field emitted holy heavenly aromas, and* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, recognizing the Presence, made it a regular place for his* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*. The second fact was that* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *smelled the myrrh ascending from Mount Moriah. Thus, when* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html) *approached him, the paradisiacal saviors brought back to him the recollection of the sweet odor he smelled in that field.*

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin summed up the enigma of a grave in the best words I have heard:

“The [nation](nations.html) which chooses to forget its past has abdicated its [future](future.html), because it has erased the tradition of continuity which it ought to have transmitted to the [future](future.html); the [nation](nations.html) which does not properly respect the grave-sites of its founding parents will not have the privilege of hosting the lives of their children and grandchildren. Is it then any wonder that the [first](one.html) parcel of land in Israel purchased by the [first](one.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) was a grave-site, and that the fiercest battles over ownership of the land of Israel surround the graves of our founding [fathers](fathers.html) and mothers?”

[**Dust**](rock.html)

The [first](one.html) use of “[dust](rock.html)” defines what [dust](rock.html) is:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:7*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d formed man [of] the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

Man began as [dust](rock.html) and man will return to [dust](rock.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:19*** *In the sweat of thy* [*face*](body.html) *shalt thou* [*eat*](eating.html) *bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for* [*dust*](rock.html) *thou [art], and unto* [*dust*](rock.html) *shalt thou return.*

***Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 3:20*** *All go unto* [*one*](one.html) *place; all are of the* [*dust*](rock.html)*, and all turn to* [*dust*](rock.html) *again.*

The burial place of Sarah was purchased from Ephron, whose [name](name.html) means the [spiritual](physical.html) power of [fear](fear.html), [dust](rock.html). The metal of [dust](rock.html) is lead. The vav nun on the end of Ephron’s [name](name.html) indicates the diminutive. Ephron, therefore, means “Little [Dust](rock.html)”.

[Avraham](avraham.html) epitomized Efar, [dust](rock.html), because he identified himself with [dust](rock.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 18:27*** *And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to* [*speak*](mashal.html) *unto the Lord, which [am but]* [*dust*](rock.html) *and ashes:*

[Avraham](avraham.html) is associated with [one](one.html) of the climaxes of [creation](bara.html); the [Akeida](human.html), the binding of [Yitzchak](isaac.html). [Avraham](avraham.html) was also associated with the subsequent crash; the death of Sarah Imeinu. To understand this, lets look at the other climaxes and subsequent crashes. [Adam](adam.html) was the [first](one.html) climax and the [first](one.html) crash.

“[Adam](adam.html) was the high point of [creation](bara.html). If he had been able to resist sinning, he would have become [Mashiach](mashiach.html).”[[52]](#footnote-52)

The climaxes of [creation](bara.html):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **HIGH POINT** | **CRASH** |
| The [creation](bara.html) of [Adam](adam.html) | The [sin](sin.html) |
| The [Akeida](human.html) | The death of Sarah |
| I am [Yosef](joseph.html) | The Egyptian [exile](galuyot.html) |
| The giving of the Torah | Golden calf |
| Building of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) | Spies despise the land |

“Ani [Yosef](joseph.html)” is equivalent to [HaShem](hashem.html) saying “Ani [HaShem](hashem.html)”. This is the preview of the revelation of Torah.

\* \* \*

Rachel was not to be buried in the Ma’arat HaMachpelah was because she was born from the revealed and there she returned. Her place is road side for all to come and visit, to [pray](prayer.html). Leah’s burial place, like her source, is hidden in the hidden. Where else is this idea of revealed and hidden? This is the relationship between Yerushalayim and Hebron.

Hebron is from the root, ‘hibur’- [connection](connection.html). It is the hidden [connection](connection.html) between [Heaven](heaven.html) and earth.

The actions of the [fathers](fathers.html) are not just a [sign](signs.html) but also an indication of [events](feasts.html) for the children. [Avraham](avraham.html) was not just looking to get ‘hold’ of a gravesite. He wanted to make an eternal [connection](connection.html) and not just between him and [HaShem](hashem.html)! He wanted to make a [connection](connection.html) between [HaShem](hashem.html) and the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people that was a [marriage](mashal.html) between Husband and wife.

[Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah were the [first](one.html) [Jews](gen-jew.html) to ever get married. Every action of man creates an action in [heaven](heaven.html). The greater the man the greater the counterpart action. When [Avraham](avraham.html) married Sarah, [HaShem](hashem.html) decided, so to [speak](mashal.html), He would marry the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. [HaShem](hashem.html) as the groom and Israel as the bride. A match made in [heaven](heaven.html)! [Avraham](avraham.html) was insuring by his actions that a spouse is not just a spouse in this temporal [world](worlds.html) but with the same indestructible eternity as the Ma’arat HaMachpelah. This relationship he instituted with his wife is the relationship he instituted for [HaShem](hashem.html) and us.

It is very fitting that the [Gemara](orallaw.html), in Kiddushin, opens with the purchase of the gravesite of Sarah. When a [Jew](gen-jew.html) gives a wife a ring it’s to buy into the Ma’arat HaMachpelah. It’s to be with her in this [world](worlds.html) and the next. We want the relationship to be as [Avraham](avraham.html) established it, like the relationship between [HaShem](hashem.html) and us. And right after the Torah defines for us what a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [marriage](mashal.html) is, by the actions of [Avraham](avraham.html), it then went right into the story of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [marriage](mashal.html), [Yitzchak](isaac.html) and Rivka.

## Jerusalem - ירושלים‎‎



Har HaBayit (Jerusalem) – The eternal contact point to the Torah, of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) soul.

Jerusalem represents the center of the center, the focal point of Eretz Israel: “All roads lead to Jerusalem”.

Anatomically, Jerusalem represents the [heart](body.html).



The [heart](body.html) is in the center of the [body](body.html) that is between the belt and the [shoulders](body.html). It is centered left to right, top to bottom, and front to back in the area normally covered by the shirt or blouse.

The [heart](body.html) has [two](two.html) basics pumps. [One](one.html) pumps [blood](body.html) through the lungs, and [one](one.html) pumps to the rest of the [body](body.html). This pictures the ‘pumping’ of life from the Jerusalem above (to the lungs) and the circulating of that life to the Jerusalem below.

Torah is also the [heart](body.html) of the [world](worlds.html) and the quintessential depiction of the Torah is the Luchot which are depicted as a [heart](body.html).

The word “Jerusalem” is a combination of [two](two.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) words: *Yireh* and *Salem*. Yireh is what [Avraham](avraham.html) called this place when he was binding [Isaac](isaac.html). Salem is what Melchizedek called this place when he met [Avraham](avraham.html) after the [first](one.html) major war:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:14*** *And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *called the* [*name*](name.html) *of that place* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*-Yireh: as it is said [to] this day, in the mount of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *it shall be seen.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 14:18-20*** *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he [was] the* [*priest*](priests.html) *of the most high G-d. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed [be]* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *of the most high G-d, possessor of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and earth: And blessed be the most high G-d, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*. And he gave him tithes of all.*

This [first](one.html) use of the “Jerusalem” then suggests that Jerusalem is our contact with [HaShem](hashem.html) and His Word. Jerusalem is thus the eternal contact point of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) soul with the Torah.

The prophet confirmed this understanding:

***Micah 4:2*** *And many* [*nations*](nations.html) *shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and to the house of the G-d of* [*Yaaqov*](israelja.html)*; and he will* [*teach*](teacher.html) *us of his ways, and we will* [*walk*](walking.html) *in his paths: for the* [*law*](law.html) *shall go forth of Zion, and the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *from Jerusalem.*

King David faced a modern decision: Where to put Israel’s capital?

He had ruled the [tribe](tribes.html) of Judah for [seven](seven.html) years, from Hebron, when finally the [ten](ten.html) northern [tribes](tribes.html) came down and anointed David king over all Israel. With sacred oil yet clinging inside his [beard](hair.html), King David led the people straight from Hebron to Jerusalem. Why leave the tomb of [Avraham](avraham.html) for the fortress of the Jebusites? David had geographical reasons for singing, “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion.” [First](one.html), Jerusalem unites Israel. Second, Jerusalem controls the Judean Plateau. [Third](three.html), Jerusalem depends on the Judean Plateau for support.

While Hebron could unite only Judah, Jerusalem could unite all the [tribes](tribes.html). Notice that Jerusalem sits smack on the Israeli Mason-Dixon Line: With Judah to her south and the [Ten](ten.html) Northern [Tribes](tribes.html) to her north, she [commands](cmds613.html) a neutral center. So all Israel went up with King David to Jerusalem, a city none of them owned.

King David invited everyone along to watch, but who attacked? Only the king’s men. The king did the job with his own crew. David set up a royal city no [tribe](tribes.html) had owned, no [tribe](tribes.html) had conquered, and where every [tribe](tribes.html) was the king’s guest:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 5:6-10*** *And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. 7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David. 8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David’s soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. 9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. 10 And David went on, and grew great, and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d of hosts was with him.*

Years later, King David brought a [plague](plagues.html) on Israel by counting his soldiers. The [plague](plagues.html) was halted with a [sacrifice](korbanot.html) on the threshing floor that would become the [Temple](temple.html). The [Temple](temple.html) mount was purchased by David HaMelech, for fifty shekels*,* to stay the judgment of his census.

***II Shmuel (Samuel) 24:18-24*** *And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants* [*coming*](coming.html) *on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his* [*face*](body.html) *upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that the* [*plague*](plagues.html) *may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what [seemeth] good unto him: behold, [here be] oxen for burnt* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*, and threshing instruments and [other] instruments of the oxen for wood. All these [things] did Araunah, [as] a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy G-d accept thee. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price: neither will I offer* [*burnt offering*](korbanot)*s unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *my G-d of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.*

David’s [first](one.html) act, after purchasing the threshing floor, is to build an altar. This is the site where King Solomon would build the [Temple](temple.html).

In the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html) we also find various names for the [Temple](temple.html). In the [Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabbah the [Temple](temple.html) is called a “[**neck**](body.html)“:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XCIII:12*** *AND HE FELL UPON HIS BROTHER* [*BENJAMIN*](benyamin.html)*’S NECKS (XLV, 14). Did* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html) *then have* [*two*](two.html) *necks? In fact, said R. Eleazar, he foresaw through the Holy Spirit that* [*two*](two.html) *Temples would be built in* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html)*‘s portion, and both would be destroyed. AND* [*BENJAMIN*](benyamin.html) *WEPT UPON HIS* [*NECK*](body.html)*: he saw that the* [*Tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *of Shiloh would be built in* [*Yosef*](joseph.html) *HaTzaddik’s portion and would be destroyed.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 45:14*** *And he fell upon his brother* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html)*‘s necks, and wept; and* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html) *wept upon his* [*neck*](body.html)*.*

(As a side note, Rambam suggests that the 3 phrases in Bereshit 33:12 refer to [HaShem](hashem.html)’s relationship to the [three](three.html) Temples.)

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also explains the Torah when it tells us that the [Temple](temple.html) is equated to the [neck](body.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XCIII:6*** *Here that it is on account of a man, the beloved of the* [*eyes*](body.html)*, the* [*one*](one.html) *who gives hospitality to the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He-as it says, Of* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html) *he said: The beloved of the Lord shall* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *in safety by Him; He covereth him all the day, and He dwelleth between his* [*shoulders*](body.html) *(Deut. XXXIII, 12) --how much the more so!’*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 33:12*** *Of* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html) *he said, The beloved of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shall* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *in safety by him; shall cover him all the day long, and he shall* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *between his* [*shoulders*](body.html)*.*

The [Temple](temple.html) was built within the portion of land allocated to [Benjamin](benyamin.html). The [neck](body.html), which is between the [shoulders](body.html), alludes, therefore, to the [Temple](temple.html).

Strategic

[One](one.html) of the major trade routes, the route from Beersheba to Damascus, went through Hebron, Jerusalem, and Shechem, and, crossing the [Jordan](stages.html) at Bethshean, followed the river to the Sea of Galilee, thence running northeastward to Damascus. This trade route suggests that the center of Israel was a major [connection](connection.html) between trading centers. Thus Jerusalem was strategic for trade.

\* \* \*

The Land and Torah of Israel are both called by the Torah *marasha[[53]](#footnote-53)* a word which literally means “heritage“ but which the Sages of the [Talmud](orallaw.html) link to “*me’orasa*” (eros, love), or “fiancée”. A successful [marriage](mashal.html), a proper conquest of and living in the Land of Israel, [knowledge](knowledge.html) and performance of Torah, are each fraught with problems along the way.

# III. The Conquest

When Moses sent scouts to scout the land, they looked at the length and breadth of the land, but they only looked at [one](one.html) city: Hebron (Bamidbar 13:22).

When Joshua sent the [two](two.html) spies to spy out the land, they only went to [one](one.html) city: [Jericho](stages.html).

These [two](two.html) leaders, Moses and Joshua, both intended to conquer the land. Moses intended to conquer the land from the south and he therefore started with Hebron. When the [sin](sin.html) of the spies cut short that plan, [HaShem](hashem.html) changed tactics.

Joshua entered the land from the [east](east.html) and began his conquest with [Jericho](stages.html). This route roughly parallels the route taken by [Avraham](avraham.html) when he entered the land and by [Yaaqov](israelja.html) when he returned from Laban. Joshua thus followed a tried and true route that had great significance.



Joshua traveled to Shechem for the blessings and the curses: From Ebal and Gerizim. His campaign then proceeded south.

The significance of this route must not be lost. [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s route led to a temporary [exile](galuyot.html) in Egypt. [Yaaqov](israelja.html)‘s route led to a much longer [exile](galuyot.html) in Egypt.



[**Avraham**](avraham.html)**‘s route**

Moses intended to reverse this pattern in order to eliminate the [exile](galuyot.html). Because of the [sin](sin.html) of the spies, this pattern was abandoned and the road to [exile](galuyot.html) was paved again. We [know](daat.html) that the conquest of the land led to the Assyrian and [Babylonian](bavel.html) [exiles](galuyot.html). After that [exile](galuyot.html) we restored to the land only to be sent into the longest [exile](galuyot.html), the [exile](galuyot.html) we are currently experiencing.

# IV. Contact Points

Each of these [three](three.html) locations is a contact point of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) value for [Jewish](gen-jew.html) souls.

The entire war, with the PLO, is based on who’s in charge of the holy sites. The Arabs sense that their life-force comes from the [Jews](gen-jew.html)’ holy sites. That’s why their battles have always been focused on the graves of our righteous ancestors, because these places nourish their life-force. It’s no wonder that they hold fast to *Kever* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)*, Kever Rachel Imeinu, Ma’arat HaMachpelah,* and most importantly, *Har HaBayit.*

These [three](three.html) locations have become the MOST problematic area of Eretz Israel. Somehow the [goyim](gen-jew.html) [know](daat.html) that their survival in the land depends on holding these [three](three.html) places. The Arabs have built a pagan mosque on the [Temple](temple.html) mount, they have destroyed kever [Yosef](joseph.html), and they have taken over Machpelah and now prevent [Jews](gen-jew.html) from worshipping there most of the [time](time.html).

The following communal actions must be taken if we are to survive. We can NOT do these things on an individual basis. There are [four](four.html) / [five](five.html) things that will tear up the sealed decree against us, as we can see from the [Gemara](orallaw.html):

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***16b*** *R.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *further said:* [*Four*](four.html) *things cancel the doom of a man, namely, charity, supplication, change of* [*name*](name.html) *and change of conduct. Charity, as it is written, And charity delivereth from death. Supplication, as it is written, then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. Change of* [*name*](name.html)*, as it is written, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her* [*name*](name.html) *Sarai, but Sarah shall her* [*name*](name.html) *be; and it continues, And I will bless her and moreover I will give thee a son of her. Change of conduct, as it is written, And G-d saw their works, and it continues, and G-d repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them and he did it not. Some say that a change of place [also avails], as it is written, now the Lord said unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, Get thee out of thy country, and it proceeds, and I will make of thee a great* [*nation*](nations.html)*. And the other [why does he not reckon this]? — In that case it was the* [*merit*](merit.html) *of the land of Israel, which availed him.*

1. **Tzedaka** (charity)

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 10:2*** *Treasures of* [*wickedness*](wicked.html) *profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.*

2. [**Crying**](mashal.html) **out to** [**HaShem**](hashem.html)

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 107:19*** *Then they* [*cry*](mashal.html) *unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in their trouble, [and] he saveth them out of their distresses.*

3. **Changing your** [**name**](name.html) – Now she can have a son:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:15*** *And G-d said unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her* [*name*](name.html) *Sarai, but Sarah [shall] her* [*name*](name.html) *[be].*

4. **Changing your deeds** - Teshuva

***Yonah 3:10-4:2*** *And G-d saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and G-d repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did [it] not. But it displeased* [*Jonah*](jonah.html) *exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and said, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, O* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, [was] not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I* [*knew*](daat.html) *that thou [art] a gracious G-d, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.*

5. **Changing your place** -

***Bereshit (Genesis) 12:1-4*** *Now* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had said unto* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great* [*nation*](nations.html)*, and I will bless thee, and make thy* [*name*](name.html) *great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *departed, as* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *[was]* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *and* [*five*](five.html) *years old when he departed out of Haran.*

There are [four](four.html) cities that characterize our attachment to the land:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CITY** | **ELEMENT** | **ERETZ ISRAEL** [**FIRST**](one.html) | **PERSONIFIED** |
| **Shechem** – [Covenant](covenant.html) of [Fire](fire.html) The fiery torch in the [covenant](covenant.html) between the parts.The city of the [covenant](covenant.html). Between Ebal and Gerizim. [Fire](fire.html) is an idiom for [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself.[[54]](#footnote-54)[**HaShem**](hashem.html) **and Eretz Israel** | [**Fire**](fire.html) – Aish[Fire](fire.html) goes from place to place. | [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s [first](one.html) *arrival* location. | [**Yosef**](joseph.html) **HaTsadiq**[**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **ben** [**Yosef**](joseph.html)**Ovadia 1:18** And the house of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) shall be a [fire](fire.html), and the house of [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq a flame, and the house of [Esau](edom.html) for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be [any] remaining of the house of [Esau](edom.html); for [HaShem](hashem.html) hath spoken [it]. |
| **Hebron –** The unity of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people**Klal Israel** | [**Dust**](rock.html) – EfarMan comes from [dust](rock.html) | The [first](one.html) *purchased* location. | [**Avraham**](avraham.html)**Ephron** |
| [**Jericho**](stages.html) – [Covenant](covenant.html) of airThe key to Eretz Israel[**Mashiach**](mashiach.html)**[[55]](#footnote-55)** | **Air** – RuachSpirituality | The [first](one.html) *conquered* location. | The origin of [Mashiach](mashiach.html). [Mashiach](mashiach.html) judges by smell.**Bereshit 1:2** And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the [face](body.html) of the deep. And the Spirit of G-d moved upon the [face](body.html) of the waters. |
| **Jerusalem –** [Covenant](covenant.html) of Torah**Torah** | **Water** – MayimPeople go to the water. Water comes from the heights and flows to the depths. | The [first](one.html) city of David | [**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **ben David** |

## [Jericho](stages.html)

[Yericho](stages.html) was the [first](one.html) place in Eretz Israel, which was conquered.

According to the [Midrash](orallaw.html), at the same [time](time.html) as the scouts entered [Jericho](stages.html), representatives of all [seven](seven.html) [nations](nations.html), which lived in the land [gathered](gather.html) in [Jericho](stages.html). These people are called “the owners of [Jericho](stages.html)”[[56]](#footnote-56). Asking whether all the [seven](seven.html) [nations](nations.html) were joint owners of the city, the [Midrash](orallaw.html) replies: “[Jericho](stages.html) is the key to the land, once it has been captured, the rest of the land can be immediately conquered.”

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XV:15*** *R. Samuel b. Nahmani explained:* [*Jericho*](stages.html) *was the bulwark of the Land of Israel. If* [*Jericho*](stages.html) *was taken the whole country would instantly be conquered. Consequently the* [*seven*](seven.html)[*nations*](nations.html) *assembled therein.*

The town of [Jericho](stages.html) is [one](one.html) of only [two](two.html) to be referred to as **Kikkar.[[57]](#footnote-57)** Sodom is the other city called Kikkar. This seems to indicate that the reason [Jericho](stages.html) was conquered [first](one.html) was to eliminate the problem that Lot had with Eretz Israel. He wanted a place that was lush and had lots of water. In order to purge this tendency, Joshua started with [Jericho](stages.html). This was, as it were, a second destruction of Sodom.

It took the return of a daughter of Lot ([Ruth](ruth.html)), who was nearly a [female](male%2Bfemale.html) version of [Avraham](avraham.html) to bring the child into the [world](worlds.html) who would finally complete that task. David, indeed, was the antidote to the problem that Lot introduced, but the [cycles](cycles.html) of [mourning](mourning.html) were already planted into our national destiny, such that even that great building which he helped to found would not stand forever.

It remains for the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David to reverse the route and lead us in a conquest from the south. A conquest that will start with Hebron!

May we [merit](merit.html) this [tikkun](tikkun.html) speedily in our days!

In the [future](future.html) [Redemption](redemption.html), [Yericho](stages.html) will also occupy a major place. In *Sifrei* at the end of *Devarim*, it is written: And he showed him the Negev and the plain, the valley of [Yericho](stages.html), this [teaches](teacher.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) showed Moshe, Gog and the multitudes that are destined to fall in the valley of [Yericho](stages.html).

# V. [Brit Mila](circumcz.html)

As I was studying about Eretz Israel, the land of Israel, I discovered that there is an intrinsic link between [Brit Mila](circumcz.html) (literally “[covenant](covenant.html) of the word”), the [covenant](covenant.html) of [circumcision](circumcz.html), and [HaShem](hashem.html)’s gift of Eretz Israel to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people.

[Brit mila](circumcz.html) is [known](daat.html) by our Sages as a “[covenant](covenant.html) of [Fire](fire.html)“. Most men will immediately understand the association of the procreative organ, to [fire](fire.html).

To begin our understanding, lets look at the origin of [Brit Mila](circumcz.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:3-12*** *And* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *fell on his* [*face*](body.html)*: and G-d talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *[is] with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many* [*nations*](nations.html)*. Neither shall thy* [*name*](name.html) *any more be called* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*, but thy* [*name*](name.html) *shall be* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*; for a father of many* [*nations*](nations.html) *have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make* [*nations*](nations.html) *of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *between me and thee and thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee in their* [*generations*](toldot.html) *for an everlasting* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, to be a G-d unto thee, and to thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their G-d. And G-d said unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, Thou shalt keep my* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *therefore, thou, and thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee in their* [*generations*](toldot.html)*. This [is] my* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee; Every man child among you shall be* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*. And ye shall* [*circumcise*](circumcz.html) *the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *betwixt me and you. And he that is* [*eight*](eight.html) *days old shall be* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *among you, every man child in your* [*generations*](toldot.html)*, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which [is] not of thy* [*seed*](flower.html)*.*

All covenants include the responsibilities and privileges of both parties. This Brit is no exception.

Note that [HaShem](hashem.html) has indicated that His part of the Brit, the [covenant](covenant.html), includes the giving of Eretz Israel to [Avraham](avraham.html) and his [seed](flower.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:8*** *And I will give unto thee, and to thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their G-d.*

So, [HaShem](hashem.html) was responsible for giving [Avraham](avraham.html) and his [seed](flower.html), Eretz Israel. What was [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s responsibility?

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:9-10*** *And G-d said unto* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, Thou shalt keep my* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *therefore, thou, and thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee in their* [*generations*](toldot.html)*. This [is] my* [*covenant*](covenant.html)*, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy* [*seed*](flower.html) *after thee; Every man child among you shall be* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*.*

[Avraham](avraham.html) and his [seed](flower.html) were required to be [circumcised](circumcz.html). This was [Avraham](avraham.html)‘s and his [seed](flower.html)‘s responsibility according to this Brit. The giving of Eretz Israel and the [brit mila](circumcz.html) are therefore closely linked.

Now that we understand the [connection](connection.html) of [Brit Mila](circumcz.html) and Eretz Israel, lets see how this manifests later in the interactions between [HaShem](hashem.html) and His people.

The next [time](time.html) [circumcision](circumcz.html) is an issue, after [Avraham](avraham.html) [circumcised](circumcz.html) himself and his [household](househld.html), is after the [birth](thebirth.html) of [Isaac](isaac.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 20:15 – 21:5*** *And Avimelech said, Behold, my land [is] before thee:* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand [pieces] of silver: behold, he [is] to thee a covering of the* [*eyes*](body.html)*, unto all that [are] with thee, and with all [other]: thus she was reproved. So* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)[*prayed*](prayer.html) *unto G-d: and G-d healed Avimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare [children]. For* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Avimelech, because of Sarah* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*‘s wife. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *visited Sarah as he had said, and* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *a son in his old age, at the set* [*time*](time.html) *of which G-d had spoken to him. And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *called the* [*name*](name.html) *of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him,* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*. And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)[*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *his son* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *being* [*eight*](eight.html) *days old, as G-d had commanded him. And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *was an hundred years old, when his son* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *was born unto him.*

In the above pasuk, we see that the Torah closely associates the permission of Avimelech to allow [Avraham](avraham.html) to settle in Eretz Israel, with the [circumcision](circumcz.html) of [Isaac](isaac.html).

In Bereshit 34, we again see the issue of [circumcision](circumcz.html) and [dwelling](dwelling.html) in Eretz Israel, closely linked. In this pasuk, Shechem rapes Dinah and then the sons of [Yaaqov](israelja.html) agree to give Dinah in [marriage](mashal.html) to Shechem, if all the men of Shechem will be [circumcised](circumcz.html). In turn, Shechem agrees to let [Yaaqov](israelja.html) and his family settle in Eretz Israel.

Most [Jews](gen-jew.html) understand that a man must be [circumcised](circumcz.html) in order to [eat](eating.html) the [Pesach](passover.html) lamb. It is also well [known](daat.html) that all males were [circumcised](circumcz.html) before the [Pesach](passover.html) in Egypt:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:48*** *And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the* [*Passover*](passover.html) *to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, let all his males be* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as* [*one*](one.html) *that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall* [*eat*](eating.html) *thereof.*

This pasuk also clearly associates Eretz Israel and [circumcision](circumcz.html).

At this chronological point, something strange happens. The Children of Israel are [circumcised](circumcz.html) in preparation for the [Passover](passover.html), which in turn is the preparation for [leaving Egypt](thebirth.html) and entering Eretz Israel. The Children of Israel will be in the wilderness for [forty](forty.html) years, yet no “[new](new.html) borns” will be [circumcised](circumcz.html) in that entire [forty](forty.html)-year period. Why?

The answer to this puzzling question can be understood by looking at the next [time](time.html) that the Children of Israel are [circumcised](circumcz.html):

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 5:2-8*** *At that* [*time*](time.html)[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and* [*circumcise*](circumcz.html) *again the children of Israel the second* [*time*](time.html)*. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this [is] the cause why Joshua did* [*circumcise*](circumcz.html)*: All the people that came* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, [that were] males, [even] all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*. Now all the people that came out were* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*: but all the people [that were] born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, [them] they had not* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*. For the children of Israel walked* [*forty*](forty.html) *years in the wilderness, till all the people [that were] men of war, which came* [*out of Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: unto whom* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sware that he would not shew them the land, which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sware unto their* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children, [whom] he raised up in their stead, them Joshua* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html) *them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, till they were whole.*

Yehoshua and the Children of Israel have just crossed the [Jordan](stages.html) river. They have entered Eretz Israel. All those who were born in the wilderness are to be [circumcised](circumcz.html) in preparation for inheriting Eretz Israel. However, the pasuk also tells us that the [generation](toldot.html) that died in the wilderness, the [circumcised](circumcz.html) ones, were NOT permitted to enter Eretz Israel because they had not obeyed [HaShem](hashem.html)’s voice. This suggests that those who are [circumcised](circumcz.html) have a chance of entering Eretz Israel, but those who are not [circumcised](circumcz.html), can NOT enter Eretz Israel. We are explicitly told that the [sin](sin.html) of the spies caused the people to [sin](sin.html) and not obey the voice of [HaShem](hashem.html):

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 14:20-24*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But [as] truly [as] I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these* [*ten*](ten.html) *times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his* [*seed*](flower.html) *shall possess it.*

So, this still does not explain why those born in the wilderness were not [circumcised](circumcz.html)?

The Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that the [new](new.html) [generation](toldot.html), those who were under [twenty](twenty.html) years of age at the [time](time.html) of the [sin](sin.html) of the spies, was exempt from the [mitzva](cmds613.html) because of their unpredictable [travel](mashal.html) plan and its dangers[[58]](#footnote-58). Rashi, in particular, talks about a north wind that [HaShem](hashem.html) caused to blow during the entire [forty](forty.html) years in the wilderness. The [dust](rock.html) stirred up by this wind made it hazardous to [circumcise](circumcz.html).

So why did [HaShem](hashem.html) cause this north wind? Rashi gives us a concise explanation:

*“If your offspring will observe the* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *of* [*circumcision*](circumcz.html) *they will enter the Holy Land; if not, they will not enter.”* (Rashi on Joshua 5:4).

Because the spies slandered Eretz Israel, [HaShem](hashem.html) understood that the people did not want Eretz Israel. Because they did not want His part, [HaShem](hashem.html) did not want the people to be able to fulfill the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of [circumcision](circumcz.html). Therefore, [HaShem](hashem.html) sent a north wind to prevent the people from being [circumcised](circumcz.html).

In the days of Moshe, [HaShem](hashem.html) made explicit another implication of this [Brit Mila](circumcz.html) that may be missed by some folks. This [connection](connection.html) shows that there is an intrinsic implication that [circumcision](circumcz.html) of the [heart](body.html) happen along with the [circumcision](circumcz.html) of the foreskin:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:16***[*Circumcise*](circumcz.html) *therefore the foreskin of your* [*heart*](body.html)*, and be no more* *stiff-necked.*

[First](one.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) [commands](cmds613.html) that [Avraham](avraham.html)’s [seed](flower.html) [circumcise](circumcz.html) their hearts, then [HaShem](hashem.html) ties that [command](cmds613.html) to Eretz Israel:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:8-9*** *Therefore shall ye keep all the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *which I* [*command*](cmds613.html) *you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; And that ye may prolong [your] days in the land, which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sware unto your* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *to give unto them and to their* [*seed*](flower.html)*, a land that floweth with milk and honey.*

Thus we see that [Brit Mila](circumcz.html) ([physical](physical.html) [circumcision](circumcz.html)), [circumcision](circumcz.html) of the [heart](body.html), and Eretz Israel, are all tied intrinsically into the same [covenant](covenant.html).

The ideas for this section were originally presented in a shiur by Hakham [Yitzchak](isaac.html) Ginsburgh.

To begin with, the whole land of Eretz Israel must be annexed and made a whole land. After the ‘67 war, we had the whole land in our [hands](fourteen.html), yet for some mysterious reason we let it slip away from us. Until we recognize that the WHOLE land is ours, we can never achieve peace in the land. As I heard from [one](one.html) wise man: The “Land for Peace” formula is most excellent! We have found that the more land Israel has, of that which was promised, the more peace we found in the land. This is the exact opposite of the current plan, which takes the land out of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) control.

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leaders in Eretz Israel have explicitly stated that they do not see a solution to the land problems. As we shall see, it is because they have a fundamental bias towards a secular state which is assimilated into the [nations](nations.html). This bias guarantees failure. For this reason, we must replace these secular leaders with leaders that are Torah oriented and understand how the land must be unified.

The plan of action is based on the [seven](seven.html) days of [creation](bara.html). This process correspond to the [seven](seven.html) processes of the [heart](body.html) which are encapsulated within the Sefirot HaOmer.

The solution to our problems, with Eretz Israel, can be found in the qualities of the sefirot. The following steps must be executed in order in order to properly align the land:

**These** [**first**](one.html)[**five**](five.html) **are based on havdalah, on separation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Chesed**(Kindness) | This kindness is giving the land to ourselves, to all [Jews](gen-jew.html).  |
| **Gevurah**(Strength) | We must do good before we can use our might in action. We must eradicate terrorism. |
| **Tiferet**(Beauty) | Torah [law](law.html) must replace civil [law](law.html). As long as the [law](law.html) is not [Jewish](gen-jew.html) we can not have a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) state. We now have a goyish [law](law.html) and a goyish state. |
| **Netzach**(Victory) | After we have Torah [law](law.html) we can really promote aliya. This will attract even those who are well off. |
| **Hod**(Glory) | Expel evil from the land. Not just terrorists, but anyone who is hostile to Torah. The good [goyim](gen-jew.html) can remain, but the bad [goyim](gen-jew.html) must leave. |

The havdalah state must NOT be skipped over. Havdalah MUST be [first](one.html)!

**These next are based on merging**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Yesod**(Foundation) | This is the union, the [marriage](mashal.html), is peace between the Torah religious and the secular religion, which is science. In short this is the unification of Torah and science. This is related to the [coming](coming.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html). |
| **Shechinah**(Presence) | [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David. This is when all the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people are related and the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) is restored. |

The Supreme Court and the University professors of Israel are not Yiddish, they are anti-Semitic. The civil [law](law.html) should be based on Torah [law](law.html). This would make Israel a [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *state*. The ruling [body](body.html) must become Torah based.

The road that [needs](needs.html) to be followed is the road of Teshuva. We must return to [HaShem](hashem.html). However, the primary use of [shuva](shuvah.html), to return, is to return to Eretz Israel, to return to the land.

The removal of “the kingdom of violence” must precede the establishment of G-d’s kingdom.

It then becomes significant that [**Yosef**](joseph.html) **HaTsadiq is also buried in a border city,** the city of *Shechem,* which forms the boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh. Border cities leave us with the idea of connecting something. Rachel’s tomb [connects](connection.html) Judah and [Benjamin](benyamin.html); and [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTzaddik’s tomb [connects](connection.html) Ephraim and Manasseh. Even so, ALL of Israel is made to pass between the Mount of cursing and blessing in the valley below at *Shechem*, immediately before the bones of [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTsadiq, which are buried there! **It is as though** [**HaShem**](hashem.html) **also *connected* these** [**two**](two.html)[**events**](feasts.html) **for some reason.**

\* \* \*

**Based on the Imrei Shaul, Parshat Shlach:**

“V’hischazaktem U’lekachtem Mipri Haaretz... Be courageous, and take from the Fruit of the Land”...[[59]](#footnote-59)

The Imrei Shaul, who was [known](daat.html) for his intense love for Eretz Israel, is intrigued by the phraseology of this pasuk. Its almost as if he is asking: What kind of courage is needed to take the fruit? Surely, this word “V’hischazaktem” must refer to something other than courage.

The Imrei Shaul finds some direction in the Targum / translation of Yonatan Ben Uziel. V’hischazaktem - rather than relating it to courage or strength, he translates it to mean - “make a kinyan chazakah on the Land. (Note: Chazakah is [one](one.html) of [three](three.html) halachic methods of acquiring land by demonstrating possession of it. Examples are: locking it up, putting up or taking down a fence, and [walking](walking.html) around the property.)

But now we ask - why?

As mentioned, there are [three](three.html) methods to acquire land: by monetary payment, by deed, and by the chazakah process mentioned above. To make Eretz Israel inalienably become the property of Klal Israel, it would be most appropriate that all [three](three.html) of these methods be accomplished, and that is exactly what the Imrei Shaul shows us.

Our Forefathers carried out the financial acquisition. [Avraham](avraham.html) Avinu purchased with money, when he bought Ma’arat HaMachpelah (the Cave of Machpelah) to be the gravesite for his wife, Sarah Imeinu. [Yaakov](israelja.html) Avinu bought the city and area of Shechem.

As a national entity, we carried out the documentary acquisition, with the Torah being the deed that gives us ownership. The Imrei Shaul points out that from here, we see that Eretz Israel is designated specifically for learning Torah.

However, the chazakah process was still lacking, and this was the unique mission that the Meraglim (Spies) could have carried out. Moshe Rabbenu [commands](cmds613.html) them to go out, and according to the Targum Yonatan Ben Uziel, to make a kinyan chazakah to culminate the process.

The Imrei Shaul then shares with us an astounding Gematria, the sum of the introductory words of the Parsha “Sh’lach Lecho Anoshim” is exactly the same as the [three](three.html) words “kesef, shtar, chazakah”, 789. This is the real reason that Moshe Rabbenu sent the Meraglim (Spies) into Eretz Israel, to finish this [three](three.html)-tiered acquisition process.[[60]](#footnote-60)

# Kol HaTor

Rabbi Hillel Shklover

The general mission of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)is [three](three.html)-fold: revelation of the mysteries in the Torah, [ingathering](gather.html) of the [exiles](galuyot.html), and removal of the unclean spirit from the land. The [ingathering](gather.html) of [exiles](galuyot.html) encompasses [three](three.html) tasks: building Jerusalem, gathering in the [exiles](galuyot.html), and fulfilling the [commandments](cmds613.html) dependent on the Land. All these are hinted at in the following sentences: [Ps. 24:3] “**who will ascend the mountain of the Lord**, “ referring to the [ingathering](gather.html) of [exiles](galuyot.html) [initial [letters](letters.html) — hcn-- are initials of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)]. [Ps. 24:3] “**who will stand up in the place of his** [**sanctuary**](mikdash.html)” referring to the building [initial [letters](letters.html), are initials of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)]. Wherever the word “to stand up” is mentioned, it refers to the line of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html), as in the phrase [Gen. 37:7] “**my sheaf rose**” [Ps. 24:5] “**he will receive a blessing from the Lord**” refers to something that carries with it a blessing, such as planting [the initial [letters](letters.html) are the initials of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html), though in reverse order — hcn. And in the sentences [Jer 31:20] “**return to your cities**, “ “**build Jerusalem**, “ [Ps. 102:14] “**it is the** [**time**](time.html) **to favor her**.” ‘To favor’ refers to planting as it states, “he will favor its dirt.” Each [one](one.html) of them accords with the gematria of “**testimony in** [**Yosef**](joseph.html)“ that refers to [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html). Also, these [three](three.html) tasks were given to Cyrus as it states: “I am the Lord Who confirms the word of His servant, and fulfills the counsel of his messengers; Who says of Jerusalem: ‘It will be settled’... Who says **to the depths**, ‘Dry up, and I will dry out your rivers’. Who says of Cyrus, ‘my shepherd’; he will fulfill all my [desire](needs.html), “ etc. [Isa. 44:24-28]. According to the explanation of the Gaon, the word, in Gematria, equals 131 because the purpose of building Eretz Israel is to drive out from the gates of Jerusalem. And therefore this is the mission of Cyrus as part of the mission of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)from the left side, which means the quality of *Din*. The might of [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ben* [*Yosef*](joseph.html)lies in the miraculous assistance he can offer in [connection](connection.html) with the [ingathering](gather.html) of [exiles](galuyot.html) that will come about when the awakening comes from below.

# A [Jewish](gen-jew.html) National Strategy

**By Prof. Paul Eidelberg**

Israel is on the verge of a revolution, inevitable as the rising [sun](hachama.html). Within [three](three.html) years Israel will either become an authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State or a [blood](body.html)-drenched Lebanon. Whether it becomes [one](one.html) or the other will depend very much on the ascendancy of a few clear-minded and dauntless [Jews](gen-jew.html). These [Jews](gen-jew.html) will possess the courage to see that merely reacting to Israel’s incessant crises accomplishes very little. Instead, they will be guided by a clearly articulated [Jewish](gen-jew.html) agenda. Going beyond the vague idea of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leadership and the equally vague goal of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State, they will publicize and pursue the axiomatic requirements of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) national strategy.

Before discussing these requirements, consider the results of a recent [study](study.html). During the last [six](six.html) years, more than 200,000 Israelis have become observant. Another 130,000, formerly secularists, now identify themselves as “traditionalists.” From this and other demographic data [one](one.html) may reasonably conclude that Israel can at last become an authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State. But Israel cannot possibly become an authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State so long as its advocates and their financial supporters fail to address the demonstrable fact that the principle of [one](one.html) adult / [one](one.html) vote operative in Israel makes an authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State impossible. Even now that culturally neutral principle can give Israel’s burgeoning Arab citizens [twenty](twenty.html) seats in the next Knesset. Indeed, in [two](two.html) or [three](three.html) decades, that dogmatic principle of democracy will transform Israel into an Arab-Islamic dictatorship. Long before that, however, Israel will succumb to a Lebanese-[type](types.html) civil war.

It requires no great wisdom to enumerate the axiomatic requirements of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) national strategy. Only needed is candor and courage, without which no [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leadership movement is worthy of moral and financial support. The axiomatic requirements of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) national strategy are simply these:

1. Public affirmation that Israel is the State of the [Jews](gen-jew.html).

2. Public affirmation that a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State must be based on [Jewish](gen-jew.html) principles and values.

3. Public affirmation that the primary source of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) principles and values is the Torah.

4. Public affirmation that only [Jews](gen-jew.html), whether religious or not, can formulate a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) national strategy.

5. Public affirmation that the previous axiomatic requirements preclude complete equality of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) and non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) residents of Israel. (As the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained on May 6, 1976: “There is room [in Israel] for a non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) minority on condition that it accept the destiny of the State vis-à-vis the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, culture, tradition, and belief. The minority is entitled to equal rights as individuals with respect to their distinct religion and culture, but not more than that.”)

6. Public affirmation that Israel’s system of government, its [laws](law.html) and institutions, must be consistent with the foregoing axiomatic requirements.

Authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leaders and their financial supporters must acknowledge these axioms, meaning these self-evident truths. Having done so, they must then go on to expose those basic flaws in Israel’s system of government which makes an authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State impossible. These flaws -- they are largely responsible for Israel’s disasters and humiliations, should be publicized throughout the country:

1. The dictatorial concentration of power in the Executive Branch. An Israeli prime minister can (a) make agreements with foreign states and even criminal organizations without serious Knesset or public debate; (b) dispose of the land and holy places of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People; (c) release Arab terrorists who have murdered [Jewish](gen-jew.html) men, women, and children; (d) ignore the convictions of those who elected him to office.

2. The impotence of the Legislative Branch. Lacking constituency elections, Knesset Members are subservient to party leaders, hence incapable of exercising independent judgment vis-à-vis government policies. Conversely, citizens lack power to influence government policies via their own elected representatives.

3. An unrestrained Judicial Branch. The absence of a Knesset accountable to the people augments the power and “judicial activism” of the Supreme Court, many of whose decisions violate fundamental [Jewish](gen-jew.html) principles and values.

4. A grotesque Electoral System. Proportional representation with a low threshold multiplies parties, fragments the Government and renders the latter incapable of developing coherent and comprehensive national policies.

5. The lack of a clear and concise and coherent [body](body.html) of fundamental [laws](law.html) -- say a basic document with which to educate youth and thereby promote civic virtue and national unity. These flaws point to only [one](one.html) remedy: a Constitution. Furthermore, anyone who thinks Israel can be or become a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State without a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Constitution, meaning a Constitution that institutionalizes the primacy of Judaism, is suffering from ignorance or intimidated by the bogeyman of “racism.” And if he is a philanthropist supporting Israeli “causes,” he is probably squandering, or not putting to best use, a great deal of his money.

[Fear](fear.html) of the racist canard dominates Israel’s political and intellectual leaders and their financial backers in the Diaspora. Even among [Jews](gen-jew.html) who want a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State, most are afraid to draw the logical [consequences](conseq.html) of such a state, namely, that its [laws](law.html) and policies must be determined exclusively by [Jews](gen-jew.html) as prescribed in a Constitution. I have written lengthy moral and philosophical justifications of such a Constitution and have elaborated on its necessity and practicality. Although more and more [Jews](gen-jew.html) in Israel and in the United States are rallying to the idea of a Constitution, the [time](time.html) is short and the need is great.

**Summing up:** Authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) leadership is impossible given the flaws in Israel’s political institutions, which flaws can only be remedied by a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Constitution. A fragmented Cabinet will undermine any decent prime minister and make it impossible for him to pursue a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) national strategy. He will be undermined by a faction-ridden Knesset whose Arab members will hold the balance of power on many issues affecting foreign and domestic affairs.

The [Jews](gen-jew.html) of Israel have only [two](two.html) alternatives: preserve the existing political system, which can only lead to disaster, or promote a Constitutional Party that advocates a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Constitution. Without such a Constitution there can be no authentic [Jewish](gen-jew.html) State. Hence the present writer will make himself available to any [Jewish](gen-jew.html) organization or philanthropist that has the vision and courage to support such a Constitution.

**\* \* \***

TO [MERIT](merit.html) ISRAEL IS TO MARRY THE LAND

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LIBERATED YERUSHALIYIM, D.C. (David’s Capital), Yom Revi’i ([Fourth](four.html) Day -- “Wednesday”), 18 [Sivan](feasts.html), 5763 (Gregorian Date: June 18, 2003) (Hijri Date: 17 Rabi Thani, 1424), Root & Branch [mailto:rb@rb.org.il] [www.rb.org.il]: [Marriage](mashal.html) and the [merit](merit.html) of living in the Land of Israel have much in common. After the death of Sara, [Avraham](avraham.html) buys a part of the land of Israel, which includes the cave of Machpelah for the purpose of burying Sarah.

[Speaking](mashal.html) to the owner (Efron), [Avraham](avraham.html) says:

“I will give you the price of the field, *kach mimeni* (take it from me) and I will bury my dead therein”.[[61]](#footnote-61)

Efron takes the money. [Avraham](avraham.html) becomes the official owner of this field and, hence, the legal owner of a part of the Land of Israel.

The [Babylonian](bavel.html) [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[62]](#footnote-62) [connects](connection.html) this incident with the institution of [marriage](mashal.html). *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 22:13 states: “When a man *yikach* takes a woman to be his wife...” Due to the fact that the same phrase, *kach* (take), is used as in the case where [Avraham](avraham.html) buys the cave of Machpelah, the Talmudic sages draw the conclusion that in the same way [one](one.html) buys the land of Israel, so [one](one.html) should marry [one](one.html)‘s wife, i.e. with money or with an object of value such as a ring.

This is an application of an interpretative rule called a *gezerah shava* which states that when [two](two.html) words are identical, even when they are stated in completely different contexts, both passages are subject to the same [laws](law.html).

This Talmudic ruling has drawn much criticism. How can [one](one.html) compare both cases? Is marrying [one](one.html)‘s wife similar to buying a piece of land? This seems to be offensive and in complete opposition to what [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [marriage](mashal.html) is all about.

Nowhere does [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html) allow a man to deal with his wife as if she is his possession. If he does, the woman is allowed to demand an immediate divorce. It is [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html) itself which objects to any such comparison. So why make it?

Many excellent explanations have been given. Without denying their importance and truth, we would like to suggest a different approach.

It may quite well be that the sages wanted to emphasize the holiness of the Land of Israel by comparing it to a [marriage](mashal.html).

[One](one.html) does not buy a piece of the Land of Israel as [one](one.html) buys a piece of land anywhere else in the [world](worlds.html). In the case of the Holy Land, [one](one.html) marries the land! The land becomes a loving partner. [One](one.html)‘s love for this land is of a completely different nature from buying a piece of land or living anywhere else!

[Jews](gen-jew.html) treat the Land of Israel like a living personality with whom [one](one.html) has deep and emotional affiliation. We do not relate to the Land of Israel as a possession to use. We relate to the Land of Israel as a living personality with a *neshama* (soul).

Our love for the Land of Israel is not like the love for a country of which the average native speaks. Like a [marriage](mashal.html), it is a [Covenant](covenant.html). A [covenant](covenant.html) is built on the basis of duties, not rights. It is a pledge which [one](one.html) does not betray.

Just as at the [time](time.html) of the [marriage](mashal.html) ceremony a man gives a woman an object of value as a symbolic expression of his willingness to make sacrifices for her sake, so [one](one.html) “pays” for the Land of Israel by making a financial [offering](korbanot).

Just as in human matrimony where [one](one.html) marries for higher and noble goals, so [one](one.html) betroths the Land of Israel to achieve *kedusha* (holiness), to transform oneself into a more dignified person and to make the [world](worlds.html) into a better place. The many [laws](law.html) related to the Land of Israel show that [one](one.html) must care for the Land as [one](one.html) cares for [one](one.html)‘s wife.

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) relationship to the Land of Israel is a love story. That is the reason why [Jews](gen-jew.html) were not able to divorce ourselves from this land even when we found themselves for thousands of years in [exile](galuyot.html). [One](one.html) does not abandon [one](one.html)‘s wife!

For other [nations](nations.html) this may be difficult to fathom, for the [Jew](gen-jew.html) it is the air he breathes.

It was Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel (1883-1946), Chief Rabbi of Tel [Aviv](feasts.html), who gave this thought still another important dimension in *Drashot El Ami* (Commentaries to My People). Just as the giving of a valued object at the [time](time.html) of the [marriage](mashal.html) ceremony to [one](one.html)‘s wife is only the [first](one.html) payment, so is the buying of the land only a [first](one.html) payment.

No [one](one.html) should ever believe that the Land of Israel is an intrinsic [inheritance](inherit.html) because the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people once bought it piecemeal. [One](one.html) [needs](needs.html) to [merit](merit.html) it every moment. Just as no [marriage](mashal.html) will endure unless [one](one.html) continues to toil for its success all the [time](time.html), so the Land of Israel demands [one](one.html)‘s constant [spiritual](physical.html) labor to [merit](merit.html) living in it.

Anything else will lead to a divorce.

*Shavua Tov* (*Have A Good Week*) from Liberated Yerushalayim,

Rabbi Dr. Nathan T. Lopes Cardozo

\* \* \*

The lesson learned from our mistakes is that [one](one.html) cannot rend that which is inherently bound. [One](one.html) cannot separate the Land from the Torah. Without eretz Israel there is no Torah, and without the Torah there is no eretz Israel. All attempts to separate the [two](two.html) can only end in failure. The [nation](nations.html), armed with the wisdom of such experiences, clings to its Torah and continues on its way. In the [first](one.html) case, that of the metei midbar,[[63]](#footnote-63) the [nation](nations.html) continued on its way in the direction of the promised land; in the second case, after Betar, wandering stick in [hand](fourteen.html), into the [exile](galuyot.html). And the mistake, once it takes the form of a lesson to be learned from, is no longer frightening; the [mourning](mourning.html) itself contains something encouraging. Yes, Israel knows no day so glorious as Tu B'[Av](tubav.html).

**Berachoth 5a** It has been [taught](teacher.html): R. Simeon b. Yohai says: The Holy [One](one.html), blessed be He, gave Israel [three](three.html) precious gifts, and all of them were given only through sufferings. These are: The Torah, the Land of Israel and the [world](futures.html) to come. Whence do we [know](daat.html) this of the Torah? Because it is said: Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy [law](law.html). Whence of the Land of Israel? Because it is written: As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy G-d chasteneth thee, and after that it is written: For the Lord thy G-d bringeth thee into a good land. Whence of the [world](futures.html) to come? Because it is written: For the [commandment](cmds613.html) is a lamp, and the [teaching](teacher.html) is light, and reproofs of sufferings are the way of life.

\* \* \*

“The I.D.F. should utterly destroy the enemy!” the text reads. “This is what David Melech Israel said and fulfilled: ‘I will chase after my enemy and reach them and not return until they are destroyed.’” Rabbi Ginsburgh continues, “We should [know](daat.html) that the Arab’s war against us is a religious war. The only way to be victorious is to strengthen our religion, *das Moshe v’Yisrael* – the true religion! Truth will prevail!”

Rabbi [Yitzchak](isaac.html) Ginsburgh

**L’shana Haba’a b’Yerushalayim!**

\* \* \*

 IN THE DESERT

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 DAN

 |

 EFRAIM - [[MISHKAN](mikdash.html)] - YEHUDA

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 REUVEN

 IN ERETZ ISRAEL

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 EFRAIM

 |

 DAN - [BINYAMIN] - REUVEN

 |

 YEHUDA

\* \* \*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) tells us that the [three](three.html) most sacred places for Judaism in Israel are Machpelah in Hebron (that was bought by [Avraham](avraham.html)), “Kever [Yosef](joseph.html)“ in Shechem (that was bought by [Yaaqov](israelja.html)) and the “[Temple](temple.html) Mount” area (which was bought by King David - from the Jebusites). Today these sacred places are in the middle of the battle between the [Jews](gen-jew.html) and the Palestinians who both believe that they should own them.

Let us be found worthy of the land. Let us not be vomited out!

\* \* \*

This [study](study.html) was written by

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1. Most of this study I learned from Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Shemot 12:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tehillim 111:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rashi quoting the [Midrash](orallaw.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **Tanach** ([Hebrew](http://www.betemunah.org/hebrew.html): תנ׳ך‎) (also Tanach, IPA: [ta’nax] or [tə’nax], Tenakh or Tenak) is an acronym that identifies the Hebrew Bible. The acronym is formed from the initial Hebrew letters of the Tanach’s three traditional subdivisions:

**Torah** (תורה), meaning “teaching” or “[law](http://www.betemunah.org/law.html),” includes the [Five](http://www.betemunah.org/five.html) Books of Moses. The Torah is also known by its Greek name, “the Pentateuch”, which similarly means “five scrolls”.

**Neviim** (נביאים), meaning “Prophets”. The Neviim are often divided into the Earlier Prophets, which are generally historical, and the Later Prophets, which contain more exhortational prophecies.

**Ketuvim** (כתובים), meaning “Writings”, are sometimes also known by the Greek title “Hagiographa.” These encompass all the remaining books, and include the [Five](http://www.betemunah.org/five.html) Scrolls. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bereshit (Genesis) 15:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Bereshit 36:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Bereshit 36:43 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bereshit 37:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Bereshit 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. By the way, this suggests, as our Sages [teach](teacher.html), that our thoughts when we [make love](marriageact.html) will be foundational to the child we are creating. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Logic of the Mind, Logic of the Heart* [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Anatomically, the midbrain (Shechem), the heart (Jerusalem), and the womb (Hebron) are all in the center (from left to right and from front to back. They are also dead center of their respective areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Seen anatomically, the brain, heart, and womb are the warm areas of the body which always stay warm. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. If we look anatomically, Shechem is the midbrain between the two hemispheres, Jerusalem is the heart which is between two lungs, and Hebron is the womb between two ovaries. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Yirmeyahu chapter 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Bereshit (Genesis) 33:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Egypt [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Bereshit (Genesis) 33:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “Ant.” iv. 8, § 48 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Bereshit 37:12 *et seq.* [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Shoftim 21:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This paragraph was excerpted from The Jewish Encyclopedia. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The sheaves of corn [a symbol of the mind] that bowed to the sheaf of Joseph. – Bereshit (Genesis) 37:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 33:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. King Solomon [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket vol. 3, pp. 58-60. Maamarie Admur HaEmtza’I, Devarim vol. 1, p. 9-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. see Rashi on Bereshit 48:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See the Pri Tzadik, Parashat [VaYishlach](annual.html), 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. [Sotah 11a](orallaw.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. “The Lamentation in Jerusalem”, The Articles of HaRav Kook [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This promise of ‘seed’ is fitting for Machpelah which is the womb of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The Patriarch - Jacob [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Bereshit 33:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Bereshit 34 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Gen 37:12-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Gen 37:15-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Quoted in Shai Latorah [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Rashi, Bereshit 37:33 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Known simply as “Rebbi” [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. [Midrash Yehonatan](orallaw.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Yehoshua chapter 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Sotah 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Succah 52a [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. [Sotah](orallaw.html) 11a; Rashi, Bereshit 37:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Sotah 34b [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Hakham Ovadia Yosef shlita [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. ‘Er. 53a; Sotah 13a; comp. Gen. R. lviii. 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Yitzchak Ginsburg [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Shemot (Exodus) 6:8, Devarim (Deuteronomy) 33:4) [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Devarim 4:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Yochanan 4:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Yehoshua 24:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. plain - see Devarim 34:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Yevamot 73a [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Bamidbar 13:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Translated by Reb Eliezer Weger of Rechovot, a Modzitzer Chasid.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *Bereshit/Genesis 23:13* [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Tractate Kiddushin 2a* [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. "Dead of the Desert" [↑](#footnote-ref-63)