

The Land Leapt

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# Introduction

The Gemara[[1]](#footnote-1) speaks of three journeys that were miraculously shortened (kefitzat *[Kefitzas]* HaDerech קְפִיצַת הַדֶּרֶךְ) or (*kaftza lo ha'aretz*) in order to accomplish a critical task in a transcendent way. In this study, I would like to look at these three journeys in depth and try to bring out why they needed to be miraculous and why these three journeys were shortened.

Whether we say that the “land leapt”, the “land folded”, “jumping of the way”, the “earth contracted”, the “earth shrink”, the “earth jumped”, the “Leap of the Earth”, “Kefisat ha-derekh”,[[2]](#footnote-2) “the jumping of the road”, “jumping of the path”, “leap of distance”, “folding the way”, “jumping of the path/road/way”, “leapfrogging”, “shrinking of the road”,[[3]](#footnote-3) teleportation, quantum leap, they all add up to a miraculous journey.

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| ְ קְפִיצַת הַדֶּרֶך | קְפִיצַת הַארץ |
| *kefitzat haderech* | *Kefitzat Ha’Aretz* |

Kabbalah teaches that those episodes in which there was miraculous shortening of the distance, or "*kefitzat HaDerech*" in Hebrew, it was not the traveling time that was shortened but rather the distance itself. The tzaddik was suspended, so to speak, above the boundaries of time and space, so that he could move instantaneously from one place to another. The rules of nature remained in place; the tzaddik simply transcended them.

Whether the land folded to permit an earlier arrival, or time slowed down, either way, *kefitzat haderekh[[4]](#footnote-4)* shortens the time it takes to reach a destination. In some way, *kefitzat haderekh* changes the normal rules of physics and merges time and space[[5]](#footnote-5) in a way that is not normally seen.

As we examine these three journeys that were shortened, notice that ‘speed’ was not a critical issue. In each of these three events, there was no need to get there quickly. This is an important point that we will examine as we look at these journeys.

As we shall see, the Gemara links three of these miraculous journeys – together. This teaches us that there is a significant allegorical connection for these three journeys. Let’s attempt to discern this allegorical connection as we progress through the background for these journeys.

Rashi brings another example of kefitzatHaDerech in his comments on Deuteronomy (Debarim) 1:2 –

*It is eleven days journey from Horeb Moses said to them: “See what you caused! There is no shorter route from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea than the way through Mount Seir, and even that is a journey of eleven days. But you traversed it in three days!”*

 *For they traveled from Horeb on the twentieth of lyar, as it is said, “And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month [... the children of Israel traveled...]” (Num. 10:11-12). And on the twenty-ninth of Sivan, they sent out the spies from Kadesh Barnea, (an interval of 40 days; cf. Ta’anith 29a).*

*Subtract from them the thirty days they spent at Kivroth Hataavah (Num. 11:34), where they ate the meat a “month of days,” and the seven days they spent at Hazeroth for Miriam to be confined [as a mezora’ath] (Num. 12:15); we find therefore, that this entire journey [from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea] took [only] three days.*

*And to such an extent did the Shechinah exert itself to hasten your arrival to the land of Canaan, but because you sinned, He made you travel around Mount Seir for forty years.[[6]](#footnote-6)*

Rashi has given us sufficient information on this incident. Thus, we will elaborate on the three previos journeys.

# The First journey – Avraham

Abraham, in his battle with the four kings, miraculously covered a large distance very quickly. Abraham and his small army set out in the darkness of night. Although they were ten days’ travel from the four kings, they miraculously reached Damascus, where the kings were, in a single day.

**Ramban 14:15** AND HE PURSUED THEM UNTO HOBAH, WHICH IS ON THE LEFT HAND OF DAMASCUS. It is known that there is a great distance from the oaks of Mamre in Hebron in the land of Judah, to Damascus, which is outside the Land. If so, he pursued them for many days until he forced them to leave the land for they were returning to Babylon, their country. Or possibly there occurred here a great miracle, just as our Rabbis expounded from the verse, *The way with his foot he treadeth not*.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Midrash Rabbah - Genesis 43:3** R. Levi and Eleazar in R. Jose's name said: Abraham's steps were three miles long.[[8]](#footnote-8) R. Judah b. R. Sieon said: They were one mile long, for it says, ‘*The way with his feet he treadeth not*.’[[9]](#footnote-9)

Rashi to Beresit (Genesis) 14:15: **at night:** i.e., after nightfall he did not refrain from pursuing them. The Midrash Aggadah (Gen. Rabbah 43:3) states, however, that the night was divided, and in its first half, a miracle was wrought for him, and its second half was preserved for the [miracle of] midnight in Egypt.

# The Second Journey - Eliezer

The first journey that was miraculously shortened was the journey of the servant of Avraham, Eliezer, who was sent by Avraham to get a wife for Yitzchak after the Akeida, the binding of Yitzchak. This wasn’t just a simple match. The future of the Jewish nation was on the line. Yitzchak’s wife, Rivka, would not only replace Sarah imeinu,[[10]](#footnote-10) but she would become the next of the imahot.[[11]](#footnote-11) She would be the wife of the first Jew circumcised on the eighth day. This wife would make Yitzchak whole. This first journey took place on Tishri 15, the first day of Succoth. This journey is recorded in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 24:34*** *And he said: ‘I am Avraham’s servant. 35 And HaShem hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great; and He hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses. 36 And Sarah my master’s wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath. 37 And my master made me swear, saying: Thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. 38 But thou shalt go unto my father’s house, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son. 39 And I said unto my master: Peradventure the woman will not follow me. 40 And he said unto me: HaShem, before whom I walk, will send His angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father’s house; 41 then shalt thou be clear from my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give her not to thee, thou shalt be clear from my oath. 42 And I came this day unto the fountain, and said: HaShem, the G-d of my master Avraham, if now Thou do prosper my way which I go: 43 behold, I stand by the fountain of water; and let it come to pass, that the maiden that cometh forth to draw, to whom I shall say: Give me, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher to drink; 44 and she shall say to me: Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels; let the same be the woman whom HaShem hath appointed for my master’s son.*

This passage poses a number of interesting questions:

1. Avraham’s agent is not named, but rather he is referred to as ‘Avraham’s servant’. Thus, we learn a relationship, not a name. Chazal infer that this is Eliezer, why he is not named? – Perhaps to add to the compounding indirectness of this episode.
2. Avraham’s servant is an agent for Avraham, yet his mission is to fetch a bride for Yitzchak. How can this be? An agent may not be an ‘indirect’ agent. This means that in order for this servant to fetch a bride for Yitzchak, he must belong to Yitzchak, yet the Torah explicitly names him as ‘Avraham’s servant’. What is going on here?[[12]](#footnote-12) – Avraham gave a bill of sale which gave everything he owned to Yitzchak – including Eliezer, so that Rivka would understand Yitzchak’s greatness.
3. When the servant devises his test, why is he so circumspect? Why not just have HaShem point out the girl and say, “This is Yitzchak’s bride”? – He wants to put in his Hishtadlus, his own effort to verify Rivka’s worthiness.
4. Why does HaShem send an ‘angel’ to prosper the servant’s way? Why not do the job Himself? – As Avraham sent a servant to accomplish this mission, so also did HaShem send a servant to accomplish this mission – mida-keneged-mida.

Each of our questions revolves around the roundabout, or *indirect*, way that the mission of ‘Abraham’s servant’ is accomplished. This circumspect perspective will be found in each of the miraculous journeys that the Gemara highlights.

Chazal understood that the “land leapt” for Eliezer so that a 17-day journey was accomplished in three hours.[[13]](#footnote-13) This happened for both legs of his journey the going and the returning segments.[[14]](#footnote-14) This leaping of the land does not, at first blush, appear to be required. Yitzchak is thirty-seven years old. What difference would a few more days, waiting for his bride, make? Yitzchak was already thirty-seven years old. It does not appear as though it would make much difference if he had to wait an extra thirty-four days. So, why did the land leap for Eliezer?

The journey was supposed to take 17 days, but HaShem made a miracle and it took only 3 hours.

Pirkei D’Rebbi Eliezer chapter #16 says that the normal travel time from Chevron to Charan is 17 days. However, Eliezer’s trip took only three hours. The Gemara, in Sanhedrin 95a, states that Eliezer told the members of Rivka’s family that he left Chevron and arrived in Charan on the same day. HaRav David Oppenheim explains why Eliezer’s “kefitzat HaDerech”, high-speed travel, took exactly three hours. He says that Eliezer started out on his trip on the first day of Succoth. (I don’t know his source for this. Perhaps according to the opinion that the Akeida took place on Yom Kippur, and it took three days to return to Chevron, plus the day of eulogy and wailing in mourning, we are in the 14th of Tishrei. That evening, the first day of Succoth ended the “Shivah”,[[15]](#footnote-15) and on the next morning Avraham dispatched Eliezer.) As a servant of Avraham, he was bound by the negative commands, mitzvot “lo saa’seh,” and there is a Torah restriction to travel beyond 12 mil on Shabbat or Yom Tov. The average distance covered by a person in an hour is 4 mil. Thus, in three hours one covers 12 mil, and can go no further on Shabbat or Yom Tov. In three hours Eliezer traversed the maximum he was allowed to travel and HaShem miraculously transported him to his destination in a moment.

What necessitated Eliezer’s that he left Chevron and arrived in Charan on the same day? On a simple level one can answer that he was showing them that he had supernatural Heavenly help in making the trip, and that this was an indication that the marriage should go through. Alternatively, some commentators offer that Rashi,[[16]](#footnote-16) on Bereshit 24:10, says that Avraham gave Eliezer a signed document that bequeathed all of Avraham’s possessions to Yitzchak.[[17]](#footnote-17) This document had a date of issue. Eliezer found it necessary to explain how the date of issue was not many days earlier than his arrival, so that the prospective spouse’s family should not think that it was a bogus document. PRE also insists that the whole journey was accomplished during the hours of daylight, so that Eliezer should not have to travel alone with Rivka at night.

Avraham perceived the very moment that Rivka was ready to be married and immediately sent Eliezer to bring her to Yitzchak. This mission to “remove the rose from among the thorns” could not start earlier, before Rivka had reached a marriageable age. If Eliezer’s journey had run its normative course of 17 days, Rivka would have had to remain with her family (the “thorns”) for a longer period of time. That is why the journey was shortened miraculously-to avoid any unnecessary detention of Rivka.



A spell for shortening one’s journey (no. 39). (Elisha ben Gad of Ancona, *Tree of Knowledge* (Safed, 1535-1536).[[18]](#footnote-18) [[19]](#footnote-19)

Rashi: “I came today, he jumped out the country.” In other words, a miracle happened to Avraham’s servant, and he went in one day, the distance normally travelled in 17 days.

We must ask: why was this special miracle needed?

Before Rivka reached the age of marriage, Avraham did not know she existed. But as soon as she became of age Avraham suddenly sensed that she was a holy person, fit to marry his son, but surrounded by evil selfish people; each second there was disaster. He had to find a way to take her out as soon as possible.

That is why G-d made the miracle. So, Rivka would not spend even one extra day in such a negative environment. The same day Avraham sent Eliezer he arrived and set her free.

Yitzchak is portrayed as an unblemished burnt offering (‘olah temimah’) who must take the same care with himself as a Temple sacrifice.[[20]](#footnote-20)

**Rashi on Bereshit 24:42:**

AND I CAME THIS DAY — Today I started on my journey and today I have arrived here. Hence, we may infer that the earth (the road) shrunk for him (i.e. that the journey was shortened in a miraculous manner).[[21]](#footnote-21)

Rashi comments: "Today I started on my journey and today I arrived here." Hence, we may infer that the earth leapt for him (i.e., his journey was miraculously shortened). R. Aha said: "The ordinary conversation of the servants of the Patriarchs was more pleasing to G-d than the Torah (halakhic discourse) of their children, inasmuch as the chapter of Eliezer (the account of his journey) is repeated in the Torah (i.e., first in narrative form and then as part of Eliezer's conversation with the family of Rivka) while many important principles of the Law are only inferred from nuances in the text."

Many have wondered why the remark of R. Aha was mentioned here since it appears to be unrelated to the comment that precedes it. Nor is it clear how Rashi inferred from the word "הַיּוֹם" (today) that Eliezer left Canaan and arrived in Haran in one day.

And our master was able to provide a single answer to both questions. In the initial narrative, the Scripture told us how Eliezer went:[[22]](#footnote-22) "He arose and he went". It then immediately tells us[[23]](#footnote-23) "and he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water", without telling us anything about his journey. But in his conversation with Rivka’s family, we find the opposite: Eliezer says nothing about his departure and mentions only his arrival. That suggests that the departure and the arrival were identical, that his departure was immediately followed by his arrival. How very appropriate therefore was the comment of the Sages that the departure and the arrival coincided because the mountains skipped like rams and the valleys like sheep. However, one could still maintain that the Scripture was just being terse, mentioning the departure in the original narrative and the arrival in the conversation at the house of Lavan, without intending to indicate that a miraculous shortening of the journey had occurred. That is why Rashi records the comment of R. Aha that the conversation of the servants of the Patriarchs was more pleasing to HaShem than the halakhic discourses of their children. For this comment proves that the Scripture was not being terse, but recounted in full the events of Eliezer's journey twice. How then is it possible that the only events that Scripture would not have mentioned twice were his departure and his arrival? It must be, therefore, that the Scripture intended to teach us that Eliezer's journey was miraculously shortened.

The Rebbe (and other scholars) are bothered by the fact that the Torah calls Rivka a "naarah" when Eliezer meets her. A naarah in Torah language can only be an older girl above 12 years of age. Otherwise, the Torah would use the word "katanah" if she were really physically 3.

Based on this apparent contradiction, ***the Rebbe resolves it by saying the Seder Olam age of 14 is her physical age. The Midrash brought by Rashi, is not speaking physically, but spiritually.*** We know that Sarah passed away exactly at the time of the Akeida. The Tanya explains that according to Kabbalah, a righteous person who dies, may sometimes be granted a mission to help a struggling living person in this world. The Tzadik, or Tzadeket,[[24]](#footnote-24) who passed has their soul reborn into the soul of their "student" on Earth, in order to help them overcome spiritual obstacles. This is called the secret of "Ibur Neshama".[[25]](#footnote-25)

Sarah was reborn into the soul of Rivka at the Akeida (right after Sarah's passing). Therefore, the Midrash calls her a "three-year-old" at her wedding. That is, three years since she was born with Sarah's soul (which happened when she was physically 11).

# Bakol

In order to understand why the land leapt for Eliezer, we need to understand the blessing that HaShem gave to Avraham.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 24:1*** *And Abraham was old, well stricken in age; and HaShem had blessed Abraham in all things* (Bakol - בַּכֹּל).

Rashi comments that “*Bakol,* with everything, amounts to the numerical value of the word *ben* (52)[[26]](#footnote-26) – a son. And *acher* (after) he had a son, he had to find him a wife.”

Why does Rashi say the word *acher*, after he had he son, instead of saying “since” he had a son?

Rashi’s comment can be understood as follows: The Ari Hakadosh[[27]](#footnote-27) teaches that Yitzchak was born with a *neshama[[28]](#footnote-28)* that was unable to have children. However, during the Akeida, his soul left his body, and when the ram was slaughtered in his stead, Yitzchak received a new part to his *neshama*. This is why after the Akeida he was able to have children. Yitzchak became “*acher*” which can also mean *another*. He became a different person.

Now we can understand Rashi’s comment as follows: “Avraham was blessed with everything, which means a son. When this son became *acher* – another person, after the Akeida, then he had to find him a wife, because he was now able to have children”.

Rashi says that in gematria, the word BAKOL has the same numerical value (52) as the word BEN – son. He has everything, but to ensure that this blessing continues, he must find him a spouse so he too can have children. That is the connection with the next verse where he instructs his servant, Eliezer, to find his son a match not from the women of Canaan, but from his hometown.

In the Bahir, the word “All” *always* refers to the Sefirah of Yesod-Foundation, which is the sexual organ. BaKol is literally Beit Kol, where Beit is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and hence indicates the number two. Therefore, BaKol is the “second All,” that is, the second sexual organ, namely that of the Female.[[29]](#footnote-29)

HaShem gave Avraham the commandment of Circumcision, which was the rectification of the male sex organ, thus assuring that he would have “seed.” In a physical sense, this meant that he would be able to have children through Sarah, and that he would have descendants until the end of time. It also implied that he would have access to the souls that are begotten by the attribute of Yesod-Foundation. In a purely spiritual sense, however, it meant that Avraham’s attribute, which is Chesed-Love, would have “seed” and enter Malkhut-Kingship, the Female, thus influencing all providence.

It is therefore written that HaShem blessed Avraham “with All,” that is, with the Sefirah of Yesod-Foundation, which is called “All.” But the blessing actually was that his attribute should enter into Malkhut-Kingship, the Daughter. It is thus taught that G-d blessed Avraham with a daughter.

The voice within us that feels this is called Shechinah. One aspect of this is called daughter – why female? A female takes in what is given and then reproduces. She takes in the sperm and then makes a baby out of it biologically.

Rashi, among others, notices that this blessing is given before Yitzchak has children and therefore links this passage to Avraham’s desire to find a wife for Yitzchak, this would make the blessing truly complete.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Now let’s go back to the Gemara.[[31]](#footnote-31) Avraham had a daughter whose name was Bakol.[[32]](#footnote-32) Avraham gave birth to something, not physically. This is an allegory, a daughter. He planted a seed that gave birth to something bigger than itself. What is that? That is *peace*. He put the pieces together, he saw the picture. He was the first one who saw the picture on their own. Adam was born with awareness. He was created with awareness. Avraham had to come to this on his own. He had to look at the world and say Who made it? What do the pieces of the puzzle mean? What am I supposed to do with this? Why am I in this puzzle? This is called middat HaShalom – the attribute of peace.

After the land leapt for Eliezer, he finds himself testing Rivka and negotiating with Lavan for her release. After securing their word that Rivka could leave, Eliezer sleeps.

The next morning Eliezer insists upon leaving with Rivka. They set off together for Canaan, and once again, HaShem makes the 17-day journey a three-hour trip.[[33]](#footnote-33) Clearly, Yitzchak’s marriage *could not wait*. If Avraham was to be blessed with ‘Bakol’, then *time was of the essence*. This meeting of the physical and the spiritual, the male and the female, could not wait any longer.

# The Third Journey - Yaaqob

The second journey that was miraculously shortened was Yaaqob’s journey[[34]](#footnote-34) when he realized that he had passed the Temple mount without praying. He had gotten all of the way to Charan before he realized his mistake.[[35]](#footnote-35) This second journey took place on Tishri 15, the first day of Succoth.

Desire and yearning for the Mikdash, the Sanctuary, are a cornerstone of Israel’s Torah. The Holy Temple established on Mount Moriah is spiritually uplifted above all other locations. As our sages of blessed memory explained in Tractate Kelim, there are ten levels of sanctity in the Land of Israel. Highest of all is that of the Holy of Holies. Only on the Temple Mount and within the Temple is physical space holy in itself. Where holiness is found in other locations, it is because they are associated with the performance of a commandment. Only in the Temple is the actual space itself holy.

***Pesachim* 88a** Rabbi *Elazar said: What does Isaiah mean when he says, "And many peoples will go and say: 'Come let us go up to the Mountain of God, to the House of the God of Jacob"? Why the God of Jacob and not the God of Abraham and Yitzchak? The answer is: Not like Abraham, who saw it as a Mountain ("as it is said this day, On the mountain God is seen"[[36]](#footnote-36)). And not like Yitzchak, for whom it was a Field ("And Yitzchak went out to pray in the field"[[37]](#footnote-37)). But like Jacob, who called it a House: "And he called the name of that place the House of God".[[38]](#footnote-38)*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 28:1*** *And Yitzchak called Yaaqob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him: ‘Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother’s father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother. 3 And G-d Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a congregation of peoples; 4 and give thee the blessing of Avraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings, which G-d gave unto Avraham.’ 5 And Yitzchak sent away Yaaqob; and he went to Paddan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rivka, Yaaqob’s and Esau’s mother. 6 Now Esau saw that Yitzchak had blessed Yaaqob and sent him away to Paddan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying: ‘Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan’; 7 and that Yaaqob hearkened to his father and his mother, and was gone to Paddan-aram; 8 and Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Yitzchak his father; 9 so Esau went unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives that he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Avraham’s son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife. 10 And Yaaqob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Charan. 11 And he lighted upon the place,[[39]](#footnote-39) and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of G-d ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, HaShem stood beside him, and said: ‘I am HaShem, the G-d of Avraham thy father, and the G-d of Yitzchak. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.’ 16 And Yaaqob awaked out of his sleep, and he said: ‘Surely HaShem is in this place; and I knew it not.’ 17 And he was afraid, and said: ‘How full of awe is this place! this is none other than the house of G-d, and this is the gate of heaven.’ 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 So that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall HaShem be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*

Yaaqob was the father of the Israelite nation:[[40]](#footnote-40) While Abraham fathered both Yitzchak and Ishmael, and Yitzchak fathered both Jacob and Esau, only Yaaqob fathered twelve sons, all of whom took part in forming the people of Israel. Therefore, Yaaqob’s dream, in which the Divine promise to the patriarchs was reiterated, is the founding event of the Jewish people. This event took place at a site whose ancient name was Luz, and Yaaqob was the one to name it Bethel, or House of G-d: “He named that site Bethel; but previously the name of the city had been Luz”.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Another Gemara offers a different perspective.

***Chullin 91b*** *R. Akiba said: I once asked R. Gamaliel and R. Joshua in the meatmarket of Emmaus where they had gone to buy a beast for the wedding feast of R. Gamaliel's son: It is written: And the sun rose upon him. Did the sun rise upon him only? Did it not rise upon the whole world? R. Yitzchak said: It means that the sun which had set for his sake now rose for him. For it is written: And Jacob went out from Beer-Sheba, and went toward Haran.[[42]](#footnote-42) And it is further written: And he lighted upon the place.[[43]](#footnote-43) When he reached Haran he said [to himself], ‘Shall I have passed through the place where my fathers prayed and not have prayed too?’ He immediately resolved to return, but no sooner had he thought of this than the earth contracted and he immediately lighted upon the place. After he prayed he wished to return [to where he was], but the Holy One, blessed be He said: ‘This righteous man has come to my habitation; shall he depart without a night's rest?’ Thereupon the sun set.*

Yaaqob is heading for Charan and ends up at ‘The Place[[44]](#footnote-44) (HaMakom -הַמָּקוֹם ),[[45]](#footnote-45) which was formerly called Luz - לוּז, which he promptly renames to Beit El - בֵּית אֵל. This is odd, and provokes some questions:

1. v.10 implies that he had reached Charan, while v.11 implies that he had not.
2. Why did he complete a 17-day journey and then suddenly remember that he had not prayed?
3. Chazal say that ‘this place’ is the Temple mount where the Akeida took place.[[46]](#footnote-46) This place was well known to Yaaqob. Why is he surprised?
4. Why was it formerly called Luz, given that Luz is associated with resurrection?[[47]](#footnote-47)
5. Why did it need to be renamed?
6. Why was it subsequently renamed Mount Moriah and Jerusalem?
7. Rashi says that the land (and some Rashi scholars say the fabric of the Universe itself) folded or ‘warped’ so that Jerusalem was the same place as Beit El. What is going on here?

Notice that the place is repeatedly referred to in a roundabout or *indirect* way. In verse 11 he arrives at ‘The Place’, which was formerly called luz (verse 19), which suddenly becomes Beit El (verse 19).

Yaaqob’s journey was shortened, but there does not appear to be any reason for hurrying. So, why did the land leap for Yaaqob?

HaRav Yaakov Medan comments: Rashi’s comments: "'Upon which you lie' – HaShem 'rolled up' all of Eretz Israel under him, hinting to him that it would be easy for his descendants to conquer."[[48]](#footnote-48)

This suggests to us that it is of no importance where Yaaqob actually lay; either way, the entire land was folded up under him. Thus, even if he lay in Beit-El, HaShem may have been speaking to him from Mount Moriah. Rashi adds to this by explaining:

"'He happened upon the place', the text makes no mention of which place it was, rather it refers to 'the place', which was mentioned elsewhere, i.e., Mount Moriah, concerning which it is written, 'He saw the place from afar.'"[[49]](#footnote-49)

Thus, he concludes that the specific place upon which Yaakov alighted was actually Mount Moriah.

Further on, Rashi comments as follows:

"Furthermore, [the Sages] taught: YAAQOB CALLED JERUSALEM 'BEIT-EL.' But this [i.e., where he was] was Luz, not Jerusalem; so, from where do they deduce this? I maintain that Mount Moriah was uprooted and brought here; it was a miraculous displacement of land… in which the Temple came to him in Beit-El; this is the meaning of the phrase, 'he alighted upon the place.'

And if we ask: why did Yaaqob then not stop when he passed by [the site of] the Temple? He did not pay attention to stop at the place that his forefathers had prayed, but Heaven delayed him there. He went all the way to Charan … but when he arrived there, he said, 'Perhaps I have passed a place where my forefathers prayed, and I did not pray there?' He decided to return, and when he reached Beit-El the land was uprooted for him."[[50]](#footnote-50)

Here Rashi explains that Yaaqob did indeed reach Beit-El on his way back from Charan, but the land contracted itself for him and Mount Moriah came to where he was.

Rashi comments further:

"'But the house of God', Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Yossi ben Zimra: This ladder rested with its foot in Be'er Sheva, while the middle of it hung over the [site of the] Temple. For Be'er Sheva is in the southern part of Yehuda, with Jerusalem in its northern part, on the border between Yehuda and Binyamin. Beit-El is in the northern part of the portion of Binyamin, on the border between Binyamin and the children of Yosef. Thus, the foot of the ladder was in Be'er Sheva and its head in Beit-El, such that the middle of it stretched over Jerusalem."[[51]](#footnote-51)

In other words, Yaaqob did indeed sleep in Beit-El, but the "gateway to heaven" he saw at an incline over Mount Moriah. Thus, Yaaqob actually directed his heart towards Mount Moriah, for this is the place that HaShem chose.

Altogether, Rashi provides four different ways of turning the "Beit-El" of the literal text into Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. And all this just to prevent any possibility of our deducing from our parasha that the place that HaShem chooses for the establishment of the Temple is the city of Beit-El.

Any way you look at it, this shortened journey involved ‘The Place’, *indirectly*. Place seems to be the whole issue of this shortened journey.

# The Fourth Journey - Abishai ben Zeruiah

The third journey, that was miraculously shortened, involved a lesser known personality, Abishai ben Zeruiah. Abishai was coming to save David in this incident:

***Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:15*** *And the Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines; and David waxed faint. 16 And Ishbibenob,[[52]](#footnote-52) who was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with new armour, thought to have slain David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, saying: ‘Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel.’*

In this next daf, Sanhedrin 95a, we find a description of the incident where the journey was shortened for Abishai the son of Zeruiah. This account addresses David’s Divine punishment for being implicated in the death of the priests of Nob[[53]](#footnote-53) and for other sins.

***Sanhedrin 95a*** *And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.[[54]](#footnote-54) What is meant by ‘And Ishbi-be-nob’?[[55]](#footnote-55) — Rab Judah said in Rab’s name: A man who came on account of Nob.[[56]](#footnote-56) [For] the Holy One, blessed be He had said to David, ‘How long will this crime be hidden in thy hand. [i.e. unpunished]. Through thee Nob, the city of Priests, was massacred; through thee Doeg the Edomite was banished; and through thee Saul and his three sons were slain:[[57]](#footnote-57) wouldst thou rather thy line to end, or be delivered unto the enemy’s hand? He replied: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! I would rather be delivered into the enemy’s hand than that my line should end.’[[58]](#footnote-58) One day, when he [David] ventured forth to Sekhor Bizzae,[[59]](#footnote-59) Satan appeared before him in the guise of a deer. He shot arrows at him, but did not reach him, and was thus led on until inveigled into the land of the Philistines. When Ishbi-benob espied him, he exclaimed, ‘It is he who slew my brother Goliath.’ So, he bound him, doubled him up and cast him under an olive press; but a miracle was wrought, and the ground softened under him. Hence it is written, Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.[[60]](#footnote-60) Now that day was Sabbath Eve, and Abishai the son of Zeruiah,[[61]](#footnote-61) washing his head in four gribahs[[62]](#footnote-62) of water, remarked some blood-stains [therein]. Others say a dove came and beat [its wings] before him. Thereupon he reasoned: Israel[[63]](#footnote-63) is likened to a dove, as it is written, ye are as the wings of a dove covered with silver;[[64]](#footnote-64) this must be an intimation that David is in trouble. So he went to his house, but did not find him. Now, said he, we learnt, One may not ride upon his [sc. a king’s] horse, nor sit upon his seat, nor use his sceptre:[[65]](#footnote-65) but how is it in a time of danger? So he went and propounded the question in the schoolhouse, and was answered, ‘In time of danger, it is permitted.’ He then mounted his [sc. David’s] mule and rode off,[[66]](#footnote-66) and the earth contracted under him.[[67]](#footnote-67) Whilst riding, he saw Orpah[[68]](#footnote-68) his [sc. Ishbi-benob’s] mother spinning. On descrying him, she broke off [the thread of] the spindle and threw it [the spindle] at him, intending to kill him. Then she said, ‘Young man, bring me the spindle.’[[69]](#footnote-69) but he threw it on the top of her head instead, and killed her. When Ishbi-benob beheld him, he said [to himself], Now that there are two they will slay me. So he threw David up [in the air] and stuck his spear [into the earth], Saying. ‘Let him fall upon it, and perish;’ but Abishai pronounced the Divine Name,[[70]](#footnote-70) by means of which David was held suspended between heaven and earth. (Why did not David pronounce it himself? — Because ‘a prisoner cannot free himself from prison.’) [Abishai] then enquired of him, ‘What dost thou here?’ — ‘Thus did G-d speak unto me,[[71]](#footnote-71) and thus did I answer Him,’ replied he. ‘Reverse thy prayer.’[[72]](#footnote-72) said he: ‘let thy grandson sell wax rather than that thou shouldst suffer.’[[73]](#footnote-73) ‘If so,’ said he, ‘do thou aid me [to reverse it].’ Hence it is written, But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him,[[74]](#footnote-74) upon which Rab Judah commented in Rab’s name: He succoured him in prayer. Abishai then [again] pronounced the Divine Name and brought him down[[75]](#footnote-75) [from midair, where he was still suspended]. Now Ishbi-benob was pursuing them. When they reached Kubi[[76]](#footnote-76) they said to [each other], ‘Let us stand [and fight] against him.’ [But they were still afraid, and proceeded further.] When they reached Bethre[[77]](#footnote-77) they said, ‘Can two whelps kill a lion?’[[78]](#footnote-78) So they taunted him, ‘Go and find thy mother Orpah in the grave.’ On their mentioning his mother’s name to him[[79]](#footnote-79) his strength failed, and they slew him. Hence it is written, Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt no more go out with us unto battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.[[80]](#footnote-80)*

This Gemara raises a number of questions:

1. Why were there two signs (blood and dove)?
2. If Abishai ben Zeruiah needed to save David, why did he rely on a mule, as this is not a very speedy animal?
3. Why did he take the time to dispatch Orpah?
4. Why didn’t Ishbi-benob just stick a sword into David? Why mess around with an olive press, then throwing David up in the air?

Each of our questions involves something *indirect*.

It seems that since David only *indirectly* contributed to the slaughter of Nob, that he could only be killed *indirectly*. The Gemara tells us of two incidents where Ishbi-benob tried to kill David *indirectly*. Thus, even though David was not responsible, directly, for the deaths of the people of Nob, he was *indirectly* responsible.

Abishai ben Zeruiah was obviously not in a hurry to get to David. He took the time to go to the Beit Midrash and consult with the Sages. He also took time to kill Orpah. Even though David was in danger, it seems a though the danger waited for Abishai ben Zeruiah. So, why did the land leap for Abishai ben Zeruiah?

# The Three Journeys

Now that we have seen a description of the events from the *Tanach*, lets see how the *Gemara* treats these three journeys:

***Sanhedrin 95b*** *Our Rabbis taught: For three did the earth shrink: Eliezer, Avraham’s servant, our father Yaaqob, and Abishai the son of Zeruiah. Abishai the son of Zeruiah, as has just been narrated. Eliezer, Avraham’s servant, as it is written, And I came this day unto the well,[[81]](#footnote-81) implying that he had set out on that day.[[82]](#footnote-82) Our father Yaaqob, as it is written, And Yaaqob went out from Beer-sheba, and went to Charan;[[83]](#footnote-83) which is followed by and he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set.[[84]](#footnote-84) For when he reached Charan, he said [to himself], ‘Shall I have passed through a place in which my fathers prayed, without doing so likewise!’ He wished therefore to return, but no sooner had he thought of this than the earth contracted, and immediately he lighted upon a place [the objective of his journey]. An alternative exegesis is this: Pegi’ah can only mean prayer, as it is written, Therefore pray thou not for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me.[[85]](#footnote-85) And tarried there all night, because the sun was set. Having prayed, he wished to proceed: thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said: This righteous man has come to my habitation:[[86]](#footnote-86) shall he depart without a night’s rest? Immediately the sun set [before its time].[[87]](#footnote-87) Hence it is written, [And as he passed over Penuel,] the sun rose for him.[[88]](#footnote-88) Now, had the sun risen for him alone: surely it had risen for the whole world! But, said R. Yitzchak, the sun which had [prematurely] set on his account, now rose [prematurely] on his account too.*

*Spirituality comes toward the righteous one who aspires to it, and thus the limitation, which is the tool for attaining spirituality, changes in such a case.*

Let’s see how the *Midrash* treats these three journeys:

***Midrash Rabbah - Genesis LIX:11*** *AND HE AROSE, AND WENT TO ARAM-NAHARAIM. R. Berekiah said in R. Yitzchak’s name: [He arrived there] on that very day. Thus in the view of R. Berekiah in R. Yitzchak’s name, And I came this day to the fountain[[89]](#footnote-89) means, I set out to-day and I arrived to-day.[[90]](#footnote-90) Thus it is written, Thou hast made the land to shake, Thou hast cleft it; etc.[[91]](#footnote-91) ‘Thou hast made the land to shake’-in the days of Avraham; ‘Thou hast cleft it’- in the days of Eliezer; Heal the breaches thereof in the days of Yaaqob; For it tottereth in the days of the inhabitants of Nob.[[92]](#footnote-92) Thus it is written, And Ishbi-benob, who was of the sons of the giant, etc.[[93]](#footnote-93): He lifted up his shield [to attack David], at which David jumped eighteen cubits backward. Each was then afraid of the other. The one [Ishbi-benob] feared David, thinking: ‘If he could jump so much backward, how much more can he jump forward!’ While David feared Ishbi-benob, thinking, ‘If he can lift up his shield so easily,[[94]](#footnote-94) how can I stand against him?’ In that moment David exclaimed, ‘O would that one of my sister’s sons came to my assistance! ‘Straightway we read, But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him:[[95]](#footnote-95) was he then standing behind the gate?[[96]](#footnote-96) The Rabbis said: Even had he been at the end of the world the Holy One, blessed be He, would have made him leap and would have brought him in the twinkling of an eye, so that that righteous man should not be in distress. Hence it is written, ‘But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him,’ and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David swore unto him, etc.[[97]](#footnote-97)*

# Abishai ben Zeruiah

Now let’s look at what the *Midrash* says about Abishai’s shortened journey.

***Midrash Al Yithallel*** *The Holy One asked David, “Why are you bragging so much about your strength? What [good] is your strength to you now?” What did The Holy One do to him? G-d appointed for him a deer. The deer lured him, and the land shrank[[98]](#footnote-98) before him until it brought him to Ishbi-benob.[[99]](#footnote-99)*

*Ishbi-benob said, “This is David, who slew Goliath the Philistine, my brother.” He took [David’s] hand and took him and placed him in an olive press[[100]](#footnote-100) and pressed on him in order to break him. [David] immediately uttered [these words of Psalm 18:37], “You have lengthened my steps under me, And [yet] my feet have not slipped” and the earth beneath him became like a spring of water.*

*When Ishbi-benob finished his food, he took David and flung him into the air above for he thought that he would land on the tip of the spear, thereby becoming a protective shield on it. Then David said [Psalm 18:3], “My shield, my horn of rescue, my high tower.” [Once David was on] the tip of the spear, [Ishbi- benob would flip it and thereby] would cast him under, then David would say [again, the words of Psalm 18:37], “You have lengthened my steps under me.”*

*In spite of all this, Israel did not know where David had gone until Abishai, son of Zeruiah,[[101]](#footnote-101) entered the bath-house in order to bathe and saw that the water in his hands had turned into blood. Rav and Samuel disagreed. One said he saw blood and one said he saw a wildly fluttering dove before him. He said to himself, certainly the king is in trouble. Abishai immediately went to the royal palace but did not find him. He inquired about him but they told him they did not know where he had gone. What did Abishai do? He took the king’s donkey, mounted and rode it until he reached Ishbi-benob who had David in his power, and was sporting with David with the spear. What did Abishai do? He dismounted from the donkey and engaged Ishbi-benob in battle and gave him a single [fatal] blow. He found David walking weakly, his strength sapped from great fear and sadness as it said,[[102]](#footnote-102) “But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid.” What did Abishai do? He took David’s hand, bound it behind him, lashed him, and made him swear not to enter Jerusalem unless he was standing on his feet. Thus, he led him up to Jerusalem on his feet. Then David said [Psalm 102:24]: G-d weakened my strength in the way; G-d shortened my days.*

# The Fifth Journey – Noach?

The Torah, above, tells us that Noach built an altar when he came out of the Ark, for burnt-offerings of some of the “pure” animals and birds. The Midrash[[103]](#footnote-103) quotes R. Elazar b. Ya’akov that this was on the great altar in Jerusalem, where Adam offered his sacrifices.

Now, this suggests that either the “mountains of Ararat” are in the immediate vacinity of Jerusalem, or else Noach had “Kefitzat HaDerech[[104]](#footnote-104) - קְפִיצַת הַדֶּרֶךְ”.

In the days of Mashiach, “Kefitzat HaDerech[[105]](#footnote-105) - קְפִיצַת הַדֶּרֶךְ”. Will be the standard mode of transport just as it was in the antediluvian world.

# Spies Leap

**Numbers Rabbah 16:15** “AND THEY RETURNED FROM SPYING OUT THE LAND AT THE END OF FORTY DAYS (23:25). But do you not find that they walked [only] from the south to the north in forty days? Would they then have walked through the whole of it in forty days? [Certainly not;] but it was clear to the Holy One, blessed be He, that they would come and utter slander concerning the land, and that years of suffering would be decreed against that generation, a year for each day of spying, and so the Holy One, blessed be He, caused the road to shrink for them.”

# A Ship Leaps

***Yochanan (John) 6:20-21*** *So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they saw Yeshua walking on the sea, and coming closer to the ship, and they were afraid! But he said to them, ‘It is I, do not be afraid.’ Then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land where they were going.*

# Phillipp Leaps

***2 Luqas (Acts) 8:38-40*** *“. . . they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he immersed him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Ashdod, and passing through he preached in all the cities, until he came to Caesarea.”*

# Time and Space

kefitzat haderekh is the ‘leaping of the land’. Chazal debate whether the land folded / moved, or whether time speeded up. This debate mirrors the scientific concept of the four-dimensional fabric called space-time. Space-time is a mathematical model that joins space and time into a single idea called a continuum. This four-dimensional continuum is known as Minkowski space.[[106]](#footnote-106) Combining these two ideas helped cosmology to understand how the universe works on the big level (e.g. galaxies) and small level (e.g. atoms).

Einstein later showed, together with another Jewish scientist named Nathan Rosen, that it would be theoretically possible to “bend” spacetime and connect two points that are vastly far apart. It would be like folding over the fabric and then poking a hole through both layers. Such an “Einstein-Rosen bridge”, better known as a wormhole, would allow travel across extremely vast distances in a very short period of time. In other words, it would be very much like *kefitzat haderekh!*

In an amazing insight, Rabbi Wolfson[[107]](#footnote-107) brings that Rosh Hashana and Beit HaMikdash (the Holy Temple) have the same gematria, or numerical equivalent of 861. This means that they share the same spiritual DNA, one in the dimension of time, the other in the dimension of space.

The site of the Beit HaMikdash, בֵּית־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, on the Temple Mount in Yerushalayim is the absolute sanctity of **space**. It was declared so at the moment of creation, as the Gemara[[108]](#footnote-108) states, that the earth expanded from a primordial point which was later called Har HaBayit.[[109]](#footnote-109)

The sanctity of Har HaBayit[[110]](#footnote-110) is eternal and absolute, as the Rambam states[[111]](#footnote-111) that the sanctity of the site is derived from the presence of the holy Shechinah which never departed.

The Gemara[[112]](#footnote-112) explains the reason that the Torah positions the mitzva of Shabbat together with the building of the Mishkan:

*This is the Torah’s directive that the creative activities which were necessary to construct the Mishkan are the activities which are prohibited to perform on Shabbat.[[113]](#footnote-113) So here we find the dimension of space (Mishkan and Mikdash) influencing the dimension of time.*

But there is a more spectacular example of how the Mikdash slows time, in the spirit of Einstein who showed that speed influences time.

One of the 365 prohibitions of the Torah is to leave the meat of a korban (sacrifice) beyond the time which was specified for eating it or its being consumed in flames on the holy altar (notar) i.e., the meat of a korban oleh[[114]](#footnote-114) must be burnt on the altar before sunrise of the day following the animal’s shechita.[[115]](#footnote-115) However, this prohibition is not in affect when the meat is brought up to the head of the altar even if it is not burnt for an extended period of time; the reason being that time stops at the head of the altar; there is no today and no tomorrow.

In the Beit HaMikdash, space was **not subject to ordinary limitations**, as reflected in the miracle, “the space of the Ark was not subject to measurement”.

Within the Beit HaMikdash, by contrast, space was significant. Thus, the Holy of Holies was of a clearly delineated size, twenty cubits by twenty cubits, and the Ark as well had a specific size of two and a half cubits in length and one and a half cubits in breadth, nevertheless the “space of the Ark was not subject to measurement” in that *it did not take up any space in the room*.

The Talmud relates that the Ark in the Beit HaMikdash[[116]](#footnote-116) in Jerusalem, which held the Two Tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, possessed the most unusual physical qualities. The Torah specifies the Ark’s dimensions: “Two cubits and a half should be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height”.[[117]](#footnote-117) Nevertheless, says the Talmud, the Ark did not occupy any of the space of the chamber that housed it. Miraculously, “the area of the Ark was not part of the measurement”.[[118]](#footnote-118)

One of the miracles that took place in the Beit HaMikdash was the expansion of space. When Jews came there on the festivals they were so crowded in the Temple courtyard that many of them did not even have room to put their feet on the floor, so that they gave the appearance of floating in the air. But when the time came to prostrate themselves the floor space miraculously expanded, so that there was a separation of four cubits between each of them.[[119]](#footnote-119) Thus no one would hear the confessions of sin made by his neighbor and cause him embarrassment.

***Avot 5:7*** *“No man has ever said to me that I have no place in Jerusalem”.*

# Place

Most Jews in Israel came to Yerushalayim for Pesach. How many people were there?

“It was not just people from all over Eretz Israel, but large groups came from Babylon as well. As to how many people there were, the Gemara[[120]](#footnote-120) relates that King Agripas[[121]](#footnote-121) took a census by asking the priest gadol to take a kidney from each Korban Pesach. They counted 1,200,000 kidneys! The Gemara continues to relate that there was a maximum of ten people eating each korban. Although there are other opinions[[122]](#footnote-122) that up to a hundred people ate from each korban, let us suffice with the smallest number. According to this, there were 12,000,000 people in Yerushalayim who were eating the korban! This does not include all the people who could not eat the korban, such as those who were unclean, sick, or old.

“But, the walled city of Yerushalayim is so small! How was it possible for all those people to find place?”

“Wait, there is more! Not only did every person have to find a place to eat the korban, he had to find a place on the ground floor! The Gemara says that although the korban had to be eaten within the walled city, it could only be eaten on the ground floor, since upper levels and rooftops were not awarded the unique sanctity of the walled city. Also, one must take into consideration that when eating the korban, they were reclining on couches which necessitated even more room!”[[123]](#footnote-123)

“How was it possible?”

“I want to point out that the present walls of the Old City of Jerusalem are for the most part not the walls that define the halachic boundaries of the city. Rather, they were built at a later date. During the time of the Beit HaMikdash, the walled city was slightly larger than it is now. Even so, it does not make much of a difference, because physically there still was not enough room.

The real answer is that one must keep in mind the Mishna[[124]](#footnote-124) that lists ten miracles that occurred in the Beit HaMikdash. The last of which is, ‘A person never said to his fellow, the space is insufficient for me to stay overnight in Yerushalayim.’ Although the Mishna refers specifically to the fact that there was always room for people to spend the night, and they could sleep on the upper floors, it is obvious that the miracle extended to other areas as well. For example, a person never had a problem finding an oven to roast his Korban Pesach.[[125]](#footnote-125)

“How many people fit in there?”

“According to Agripas’ census, there were 1,200,000 korbanot. Each group sent at least one person with their korban. The Gemara tells us that the third group was the smallest of the three. Therefore, let us assume that in the first two groups 500,000 people and an equal number of lambs and goats, entered the Ezrat Israel[[126]](#footnote-126) and Ezrat Priests,[[127]](#footnote-127) and the remaining 200,000 entered as the third group.”

“That’s impossible! You said that the area of Ezrat Israel and Ezrat Priests was only 39,600 square feet. That means that more than twelve people, not counting animals, stood in each square foot!”

“Technically, you are correct. But, we are dealing with the Beit HaMikdash. The same Mishna which I quoted earlier that there was always room to sleep in Yerushalayim, also says that in the Beit HaMikdash they would stand packed together and bow down on the floor with ample room.”

“In order to facilitate the process, the Gemara tells us that there were rows of priests leading from where the korban was slaughtered up to the altar. A priest would catch the blood in a vessel and pass it to his friend, who would pass it along until it reached the altar. The priest closest to the altar would pour it on the wall of the altar above the foundation.”

“What was the foundation?”

“At the base of the altar there was a ‘step’ one amah high and one amah wide, specifically on the northern and western sides. The blood had to be poured above the yesod; otherwise the korban was invalid.

“Each row of priests had either silver or gold vessels. These vessels were traveling in two directions: the full vessels towards the altar and the empty ones back towards the slaughtering area. Each priest in the row would pass a full vessel and then receive an empty one. According to the testimony of the Roman non-Jew from that time, the priests were passing the vessels with such speed that they appeared like flying arrows.”

“The thought just occurred to me, that the slaughtering also bordered on the miraculous. You told me that they started the Shechitah three and a half hours before sunset. That means that they only had three and a half hours to slaughter 1,200,000 lambs and goats. Even assuming that there were one hundred people slaughtering at the same time, that still worked out to be approximately one animal per second!” (And some say 95 were slaughtered per second!)

Let me point out an interesting tidbit based on our earlier calculations of the number of korbanot. It is very possible that every group had its own oven for roasting. This is especially true when Erev Pesach was on Shabbat, and everyone was roasting the korban at the same time when Shabbat was over. If each oven was three feet square, the ovens alone would cover an area of almost four-square miles!”

Rabbi Greenman, however suggests in his article a novel concept and the consideration of another factor or dimension, that of holiness. He demonstrates in his article, based on a discrepancy in the measurements of articles in the Temple, that there was a *relativity effect* occurring. The closer one got to the epicenter of the Holy of Holies (in this case the spiritual equivalent of the speed of light) the shorter dimensions in the Temple become. His proof is that the same utensils that are closer to the Holy of Holies are indeed recorded as being shorter. The jackpot of his proof is that in the Holy of Holies itself, there is a tradition that the Ark took up no space whatsoever, in exact agreement with his interpretation of Einstein’s equations.

# In The Nazarean Codicil

***Yochanan (John) 6:19*** *So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Yeshua walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

***II Luqas (Acts) 8:38-39*** *And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

# Spying Out The Land

***Numbers Rabbah 16:15*** *AND THEY RETURNED FROM SPYING OUT THE LAND AT THE END OF FORTY DAYS (XIII,25). But do you not find that they walked [only] from the south to the north in forty days? Would they then have walked through the whole of it in forty days? [Certainly not;] but it was clear to the Holy One, blessed be He, that they would come and utter slander concerning the land, and that years of suffering would be decreed against that generation, a year for each day of spying, and so the Holy One, blessed be He, caused the road to shrink for them.*

# Summation

Each of these three journeys mentioned in the Gemara have something in common. They each relate, indirectly, to the Temple.

1. Yitzchak became complete when he took Rivka into his tent and married her. The Torah declares that, “It is not good for Man to be alone. I will create for him a helpmate”.[[128]](#footnote-128) The whole porpose of the shortening of the way for Avraham’s servant was to bring back Yitzchak’s soul mate for marriage. Consider that Yitzchak became the quintessential korban,[[129]](#footnote-129) which was offered in the Temple. The event that *immediately* preceeded the *kefitzat HaDerech of Avraham’s servant*, was the akieda of Yitzchak whereby he became a korban. Yitzchak would become the first indirect korban. (Bear in mind that HaShem never wanted a human sacrifice, which is why Avraham was not allowed to actually kill Yitzchak.)
2. Yaaqob journey was shortened only so that he could pray at the place of the Temple, spend the evening at the place of the Temple, and anoint the rock that represented the future Temple. This location was called by Yaaqob, “The Place – HaMakom”. Yaaqob would indirectly build the Temple by anointing the rock.
3. Abishai ben Zeruiah’s journey was shortened so that he could preserve the life of King David, who would desire to build the Temple. He would be the one to prepare all that was needed to build the Temple. David would be the indirect builder of the Temple.

# Common Themes

The three instances of kefitzat HaDerech have common themes.

They are three essential parts of the Jewish people.

**A**. The first Jew and a model for the Jews of all generations,

**B**. The Beit HaMikdash, where heaven and earth kiss,

**C**. The kingship of David and of the Mashiach.

They each involve the merging of the physical and the spiritual.

The first two involve marriage, and the third involves war. Each involves bringing peace to the Jewish people.

What is the common denominator between these instances of kefitzat HaDerech, and what is the message for us?

Yitzchak was born under impossible conditions. His parents were far beyond their child-bearing years. Sarah, his mother, had no womb. Despite these ‘impossible’ conditions, HaShem re-arranged the stars for Avraham[[130]](#footnote-130) and brought a miraculous son into this world. This son combined the physical and the spiritual and merged these two opposite dimensions because he was called ‘laughter’, which is the impossible merging of opposites.

Eliezer’s journey to get a wife for Yitzchak is a journey to complete the soul of Yitzchak. Yitzchak went up on the altar and laid down his life, never-the-less he was resurrected and brings resurrection and eternal life to the Jewish people. His wife, Rivka, would restore the light of Shabbat to Yitzchak’s tent[[131]](#footnote-131) after the death of Sarah, his mother. Rivka, too, was barren, yet she had twins. From these children would come the twelve tribes of the Jewish people.

King David wore the crown of kingship and also the crown of Mashiach. Despised by his family and then anointed as king by Shmuel. This was an ‘impossible’ condition. He killed Goliath while yet a youth. He defeated an undefeatable giant who had cowered King Saul and all of his troops. He wore the linen ephod of the priests, ate the showbread reserved only for the priests, and was responsible for collecting the materials to build the Beit HaMikdash, the place where the priests were to perform their service. David will also rule as Mashiach ben David. David was truly a man who lived in both the physical and the spiritual world.

Careful readers will observe that two of the instances of kefitzat HaDerech occur in the context of shidduchim (Eliezer was going to Charan to find a wife for Yitzchak, while Yaaqob was traveling to Charan to find a wife for himself), while the other occurred in the context of battling against enemies, David and his generals battling Aram.

*Maaseh Avadim siman labanim, the events of the forefathers are symbolic for their descendants*. This is another connection between Eliezer getting a wife for Yitzchak and Yaaqob getting a wife for himself. Other connections include the well. Whatever warrants it for Yaaqob warrants it for Eliezer at the same task.

It seems clear that these instances of *kefitzat HaDerech* are intended to remind us that in the areas of war and shidduchim, after we make the necessary Hishtadlus,[[132]](#footnote-132) success depends on HaShem’s assistance. In fact, commenting on chapter 60 of Tehillim, Meiri says that this perek in Tehillim is intended to instruct mankind that all human affairs and events are directed by HaShem with a purpose.

So, in essence, by intervening to ensure that souls destined for each other are united, HaShem is in effect ensuring peace within the community at large.

This was also, in fact, the purpose of the wars waged by David commemorated in Tehillim 60 - not war for its own sake, but for the purpose of establishing a universal peace where all nations are united in harmony. To achieve this end, it was necessary to wage war against those nations who opposed universal harmony.

In sum, Divine intervention in shidduchim and in war (waged for righteous ends) are two sides of the same coin representing a single goal: the attainment of harmony - harmony in the lives of individuals as represented by the home, and harmony in the world with all nations at peace (tragically, through our poor exercise of free will we often frustrate the outcome HaShem wants for us in these two spheres).

kefitzat HaDerech that brought Yaakov to the Place occurred before Yaakov even took a single step. In the words of Chazal, “As soon as the thought entered his mind to return, the land contracted itself.” In other words, the miracle occurred not with Yaakov’s initial action, but merely with his decision to act! Indeed, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt”l concurs that Yaakov did not realize what had transpired; as far as he knew, he went to sleep with the idea in his mind to travel back to Har HaMoriah. He had no inkling that he was, in fact, already there.

In this next Gemara, we see the earth contracting for the sake of saving David HaMelech’s life.

***Sanhedrin 95b*** *And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.[[133]](#footnote-133) What is meant by ‘And Ishbi-be-nob’? — Rab Judah said in Rab’s name: A man who came on account of Nob.[[134]](#footnote-134) [For] the Holy One, blessed be He had said to David, ‘How long will this crime be hidden in thy hand. [i.e. unpunished]. Through thee Nob, the city of Priests, was massacred; through thee Doeg the Edomite was banished; and through thee Saul and his three sons were slain:[[135]](#footnote-135) wouldst thou rather thy line to end, or be delivered unto the enemy’s hand? He replied: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! I would rather be delivered into the enemy’s hand than that my line should end.’[[136]](#footnote-136) One day, when he [David] ventured forth to Sekhor Bizzae,[[137]](#footnote-137) Satan appeared before him in the guise of a deer. He shot arrows at him, but did not reach him, and was thus led on until inveigled into the land of the Philistines. When Ishbi-benob espied him, he exclaimed, ‘It is he who slew my brother Goliath.’ So he bound him, doubled him up and cast him under an olive press; but a miracle was wrought, and the ground softened under him. Hence it is written, Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.[[138]](#footnote-138) Now that day was Sabbath Eve, and Abishai the son of Zeruiah,[[139]](#footnote-139) washing his head in four gribahs[[140]](#footnote-140) of water, remarked some blood-stains [therein]. Others say a dove came and beat [its wings] before him. Thereupon he reasoned: Israel[[141]](#footnote-141) is likened to a dove, as it is written, ye are as the wings of a dove covered with silver;[[142]](#footnote-142) this must be an intimation that David is in trouble. So he went to his house, but did not find him. Now, said he, we learnt, One may not ride upon his [sc. a king’s] horse, nor sit upon his seat, nor use his sceptre: but how is it in a time of danger? So he went and propounded the question in the schoolhouse, and was answered, ‘In time of danger, it is permitted.’ He then mounted his [sc. David’s] mule and rode off,[[143]](#footnote-143) and the earth contracted under him.[[144]](#footnote-144) Whilst riding, he saw Orpah his [sc. Ishbi-benob’s] mother spinning. On descrying him, she broke off [the thread of] the spindle and threw it [the spindle] at him, intending to kill him. Then she said, ‘Young man, bring me the spindle.’[[145]](#footnote-145) but he threw it on the top of her head instead, and killed her. When Ishbi-benob beheld him, he said [to himself], Now that there are two they will slay me. So he threw David up [in the air] and stuck his spear [into the earth], Saying. ‘Let him fall upon it, and perish;’ but Abishai pronounced the Divine Name, by means of which David was held suspended between heaven and earth. (Why did not David pronounce it himself? — Because ‘a prisoner cannot free himself from prison.’) [Abishai] then enquired of him, ‘What dost thou here?’ — ‘Thus did G-d speak unto me,[[146]](#footnote-146) and thus did I answer Him,’ replied he. ‘Reverse thy prayer.’ said he: ‘let thy grandson sell wax rather than that thou shouldst suffer.’[[147]](#footnote-147) ‘If so,’ said he, ‘do thou aid me [to reverse it].’ Hence it is written, But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him,[[148]](#footnote-148) upon which Rab Judah commented in Rab’s name: He succoured him in prayer. Abishai then [again] pronounced the Divine Name and brought him down[[149]](#footnote-149) [from midair, where he was still suspended]. Now Ishbi-benob was pursuing them. When they reached Kubi[[150]](#footnote-150) they said to [each other], ‘Let us stand [and fight] against him.’ [But they were still afraid, and proceeded further.] When they reached Bethre[[151]](#footnote-151) they said, ‘Can two whelps kill a lion?’[[152]](#footnote-152) So they taunted him, ‘Go and find thy mother Orpah in the grave.’ On their mentioning his mother’s name to him[[153]](#footnote-153) his strength failed, and they slew him. Hence it is written, Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt no more go out with us unto battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.[[154]](#footnote-154)*

Rabbi Tatz teaches that Eliezer’s search for Yitzchaks wife, the soon-to-be-mother of the Jewish people was in order to provide continuity of the Jewish people. The leaping of the land for Yaaqob was for the sake of the Beit HaMikdash. Finally, the leaping of the land was for the sake of the Kingship of the House of David.

This leaping of the land is exactly what will occur with the true and complete redemption, when, as the prophets tell us, we will fly on "heavenly clouds" to Jerusalem. In one instant we will take a quantum leap out of exile, not just the physical location, but an entire ethos and mentality, and find ourselves in redemption. Our perceptions, our values, our relationships will all change profoundly, and in an instant. We will transcend the former limitations of exile and experience a new world of limitless revelation, in the time of Geula.

# Shortening of time for the Exodus

While not one of the three related ‘leapings - kefitzat HaDerech’ mentioned in the Gemara, the ‘leaping’ of Pesach is still interesting.

The word *Pesach*, the Hebrew term for Passover, means “leaping over”; at a deeper level, the connotation is that of leaping over levels of growth which would ordinarily have to be attained one at a time.

Rashi[[155]](#footnote-155) explains that the word *pesach* is an expression of *dilug* and *kefitzat*. The latter two words are types of jumping, and as we shall see, Rashi correlates the idea of the Jews’ Exodus from Egypt to the act of jumping.

Pesach (פֶּסַח) can also mean leap פָּסַח, which represents a quantum leap in the blink of an eye. It can be understood as the qualitative change as the result of drastically minimizing the quantitative time.

The secret of Pesach night is about nullification of time. The key word for Pesach is “this night” הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה Halaylah HaZeh which appears only once in the Bible in describing Pesach.[[156]](#footnote-156)

The question is how can one transcend the limitation of time? According to Maharal,[[157]](#footnote-157) if one moves fast enough and minimizes the time for action, one can transcend the limitation of time.

There is no difference between matza[[158]](#footnote-158) and leavened bread except for the time difference, as the matza must be baked within 18 minutes after the flour is mixed with water.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Unleavened bread – Matza** | מַצָּה |
| **Leavened bread – Chametz** | חָמֵץ |

The only difference between matza and chametz is the small opening in the *hey* of matza (vs. the *chet* of chametz), through which opening the time is nullified.

Pesach teaches us that the Jewish people are above time, or, if you will, they are not time bound. The difference between chametz and matza demonstrates that time “kills”, even a very small amount of time. We had to leave Egypt before the bread had a chance to rise, or else we would have sunk to the 49th level of impurity.[[159]](#footnote-159) Paro’s magicians could not recreate the plague of lice, because lice are smaller than a barley corn, they are too small. This demonstrates that the size of matter, and the size of time, matter. They are both integral to a people who exist eternally; to a people who are above time and space. From this, we see that *kefitzat haderekh* is related to a Pesach concept of time and space.

The sorcerers can imitate the miracles of Moses except when it comes to the plague of lice, and according to Rashi, this was because the demon has no power over a creature smaller than a barleycorn.

According to Maharal, at some measured point an item is large enough to be considered as an individual thing unto itself, and anything smaller is considered just a part of the general world, hence “tumah” (uncleanness) can attach only to individual things, not to generalities, the boundary between the two is the barleycorn.

Pesach denotes the time of barley harvest hence the matza is naturally made of barley.

If the size of a barleycorn denotes the minimum space, baking the matza within 18 minutes would denote the minimum time.

According to several authorities, the entire 49-day period of Sefirat HaOmer is considered a single point.[[160]](#footnote-160) What makes this interesting is that the omer period is all part of Pesach. We learn this from the fact that Shavuot is also known as ‘atzeret - conclusion’. Shavuot is the conclusion of Pesach!

There’s an interesting table in the back of the Safrais’ Haggadat,[[161]](#footnote-161) Chazal which shows various early texts of the Haggadah. The detail about *tarrying* doesn’t appear in the Haggadah of Rav Amram Gaon. It does appear in the later ones of Rav Saadia Gaon and Rav Natronai Gaon.

Ramban’s approach seems to work with both Rav Amram Gaon’s text and the later ones.

But there’s a further complication: Surely in the journey from Ramses to Succoth, the dough would have leavened. And shepherd’s bread can be baked pretty quickly; brushwood fire to heat a flat rock, and there you go.

This problem is solved by Ramban’s apparently following the Mechilta that that leg of the Exodus took place in the “twinkling of an eye”. So perhaps Ramban was saying that there was *kefitzat HaDerech* which though not exactly a rationalist explanation would certainly fit “couldn’t tarry”!

**Rashi, on Shemot 12:37, says:**

FROM RAMESES TO SUCCOTH — These were distant from one another 120 miles and yet they reached there in one moment, as it is said, (Exodus 19:4) “and I carried you as on eagles’ wings” (cf. Mechilta D’Rabbi Ishmael 12:7 and Rashi on Exodus 19:4).

**Mechilta D’Rabbi Ishmael 12:7:**

In an instant, Israel traveled from Ramses to Succoth, as per (Ibid. 19:4) “And I bore you on eagles’ wings, etc.” “to succoth”: “succoth,” (“booths”) literally, as in (Genesis 33:17) “And Yaaqob traveled to Succoth, and for his cattle he made succoth (booths), for which reason the place was named Succoth.”

**Rashi, on Shemot 19:4, says:**

AND I BARE YOU [ON EAGLES’ WINGS] — This happened on that day when the Israelites came to Rameses (the place where they all assembled on the night when they left Egypt) (Mechilta D’Rabbi Ishmael 19:4:2), because the Israelites were living dispersed throughout the whole district of Goshen and in one brief moment — when they came there to set out and to leave Egypt — they all gathered together at Rameses. Onkelos translates ואשא as though it were [וְאַסִּיעַ [אתכם — viz., ואטלית יתכון “and I made you travel” (cf. the Targum on וַיַּסַע Exodus 15:22); he adapted the expression in a manner that is consonant with the respect due to the Most High G-d.

**Mechilta D’Rabbi Ishmael 19:4**

“and I bore you on eagles’ wings”: R. Eliezer says: This refers to the day of the exodus, when all of them were gathered together and came to Ramses in an instant. “and I brought you to Me”: before Mount Sinai. R. Akiva says: It refers to the day of the giving of the Torah, when Israel recoiled twelve mil and returned twelve mil — so that they “traveled” twenty-four mil for each pronouncement. “and I will bring you” — to the

**Luz Bone**

According to the rabbis, the resurrection of dead is restored from a mysterious Luz bone, which again is of the size of a barleycorn.

When one dies, the lowest level of the soul will continue to hover over the Luz bone until the time of resurrection, this comes to teach that the Luz bone symbolizes the minimum point of contact between the spiritual Nefesh and the physical luz bone, this can be referred to as a Kabbalistic term “touching and not touching”.

The concept of a camel going through the eye of the needle represents what appears to be impossible at the superficial level, in that the camel with its size is able to transcend the limitation of space.

**Holiness in Space and Time**

By Rabbi Yoel Glick

In the higher worlds, there is another relationship with time. We see with a broader vision and a different set of expectations and parameters. In the supernal realm, time is no longer our enemy. We do not work against the clock, but rather through it and beyond it. We treat time as just another aspect of existence to be taken into account in our plans. It is one factor that will affect the overall design, but the work reaches further and higher than any limitations that it creates.

Einstein saw time as the fourth dimension, the fourth aspect which defines the boundaries of our physical reality. To move beyond these restrictions is to move beyond the physical confines of this material world. To transcend time is to learn how to live in the consciousness of the heavens.

The language of *kefitzat,* jumping or skipping, is related to the language of *kivvutz,* contracting. One should not think that the miracle was that this person was suddenly given super strength that enabled him to bound over large distances, but rather that the earth suddenly contracted and the two points were brought closer together. In that moment one small step covered the distance of a great journey.[[162]](#footnote-162)

Yet if we return to the original midrash it’s clear that Chazal had an important reason to point out the existence of such a phenomenon, however unusual it was. Every once in a while, we find people who have experienced a *kefitzat Derech*, who have been able to seize a once in a lifetime opportunity to fulfill an important mission, people who were needed to bring about a revolutionary movement or introduce a novel idea, and these people somehow became leaders.

There is an intrinsic connection between the ingathering of the exiles and the present year. As explained above, the Hebrew letters associated with the date of the present year can be interpreted as an acronym for the Hebrew words, tih’yeh shnas niflaot Bakol. The word Bakol (“in all things”)[[163]](#footnote-163) is the first of the three expressions of blessing[[164]](#footnote-164) associated with the Patriarchs -- Bakol, mikol, kol, as we recite in the Grace After Meals.[[165]](#footnote-165) In regard to Avraham it is written,

***Bereshit (Genesis) 24:1*** *And Avraham was old, well stricken in age; and the LORD had blessed Avraham in everything* (בַּכֹּל).

In regard to Yitzchak, it is written,

***Bereshit (Genesis) 27:33*** *And Yitzchak trembled very exceedingly, and said: ‘Who then is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all* (מִכֹּל) *before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed’.*

And regarding Yaakov it is written,

***Bereshit (Genesis) 33:11*** *Take, I pray thee, my gift that is brought to thee; because G-d hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have everything* (כֹל)*.’ And he urged him, and he took it.*

These three words are numerically equivalent to the word *kabetz*, meaning “gather”, and implying that one of the manifestations of the wondrous Divine blessings of the present year will be the ingathering of our exiles.

**\* \* \***

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1. Sanhedrin 95b [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kefitzat HaDerech (Hebrew: קְפִיצַת הַדֶּרֶךְ‬) is a Jewish Kabbalistic term that literally means “contracting the path.” The root kefatz, in this Talmudic context, means “to clench” (in modern Hebrew and other stages of the language, the word translates as “jump”): that is, the route itself is shortened. Kefitzat HaDerech refers to miraculous travel between two distant places in a brief time. The Talmud lists three biblical stories in which this miracle occurs. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The word *kofetz* is also used idiomatically to refer to any action performed in haste or without proper contemplation. For example, when the Talmud talks about somebody taking an *ad hoc* oath, he is said to have “jumped and sworn”. The miraculous shortening of one’s journey is known as *kefitzat HaDerech*, literally, “jumping of the path,” in allusion to the speed with which one reaches his final destination. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Generally, when Time is discussed in philosophy or in science—including the works of classical Jewish philosophers—it is understood as movement, or change. The movement of the planets, the ticking of a clock—as long as these things occur, there is Time. If they cease, Time also ceases. In other words, Time is no more than the occurrence of physical events. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. from Sifrei [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Isaiah 41:3. This is interpreted in Bereshith Rabbah (43:7) as referring to Abraham and asserting that he took such long steps that he traveled a mile without setting foot on the ground. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shalom (E.V. ’safely’) being read as an abbreviation of shalosh milin, three miles (‘E.J.). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Isaiah 41:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Sarah our Mother, our Matriarch. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Imahot = Mothers or Matriarchs [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Rabbi Simeon said: Our father Abraham wrote (in his will and bequeathed) all that he had as an inheritance to Isaac, as it is said, "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac" (*ibid.* xxv. 5). He took the document and gave it into the hands of Eliezer, his servant, (who) said, Since the document is in my hand all his money is in my hand, so that he might go and be recommended (thereby) in his father's house and with his family. Pirke D’Rabbi Eliezer 16:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. From Kiryat Arba unto Haran was a journey of seventeen days; and in three hours the servant came to Haran. He was astonished in his mind and he said: This day I went forth, and this day I arrived, as it is said, "And I came *this day* unto the fountain" (Bereshit (Genesis) 24:42). Rabbi Abbahu said: The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to show loving-kindness to Isaac, and he sent an angel before Eliezer; and the way was shortened for him, so that the servant came to Haran in three hours. At six hours of the day the servant went forth from Haran, and he took Rebecca and Deborah her nurse and made them ride upon the camels. So that the servant should not be alone with the maiden (Rebecca) by night, the earth was contracted before him, and in three hours the servant came to Hebron at the time of the prayer of the afternoon-evening. And Isaac had gone forth to say the afternoon-evening prayer, as it is said, "And Isaac went forth to *meditate* in the field towards even". Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Pirke D’Rabbi Eliezer 16:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Shiva is the seven-day mourning period for a close relative. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. M.R. 59:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Rashi (M.R. 59:11) says that Avraham gave Eliezer a signed document that bequeathed all of Avraham’s possessions to Yitzchak as an inducement to have Avraham’s relatives agree to give Rivka in marriage to Yitzchak. The Pnei Aryeh of Stanislov explains that this served the purpose of allowing Eliezer to complete the marriage commitment, serving as an halachically binding representative. As a rule, a slave cannot serve as an agent, i.e. that his actions should be binding for the one who appointed him. However, one’s own servant may serve as an agent since he is owned by his master, and it is thus considered that the hand of the servant is the hand of the master. This does precious little to help in our situation, as Yitzchak was the prospective groom, not Avraham. Therefore, Avraham signed over all his possessions to Yitzchak, including ownership of Eliezer, so that Eliezer’s actions on behalf of Yitzchak would be binding. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2020/08/the-tree-of-knowledge.html [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Spell no. 39 is for shortening a long road, and goes like this:

*Shortening the road: write on a piece of kosher parchment made of deer and sew it into your robe. When you see the countenance of the town, mention these names and say this: “I adjure you, Kaptsiel, Malakhel, shorten for me the road and the country as you shortened them for Abraham. Cafefiel – and in the name of the Lord of the whole earth. Amen S[ela]”* [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Bereshit Rabbah 64:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Sanhedrin 95a [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Bereshit (Genesis) 24:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Bereshit (Genesis) 24:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Tzadik – righteous man. Tzadeket = righteous woman. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Ibur,* is the "impregnation" of a person by the soul of a rectified, righteous *tzadik* because the *Nefesh* has completed its *tikkun*, but it cannot receive *Ruach* without reincarnating since the *tikkun* did not take place in its very first *gilgul*. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. בן : ב = 2, ן = 50. בן = 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Isaac (ben Solomon) Luria Ashkenazi (1534 – July 25, 1572), commonly known in Jewish religious circles as "Ha'ARI" (meaning "The Lion"), "Ha'ARI Hakadosh" [the holy ARI] or "ARIZaL" [the ARI, Of Blessed Memory (Zikhrono Livrakha)], was a foremost rabbi and Jewish mystic in the community of Safed in the Galilee region of Ottoman Syria. He is considered the father of contemporary Kabbalah; his teachings being referred to as Lurianic Kabbalah. While his direct literary contribution to the Kabbalistic school of Safed was extremely minute (he wrote only a few poems), his spiritual fame led to their veneration and the acceptance of his authority. The works of his disciples compiled his oral teachings into writing. Every custom of the Ari was scrutinized, and many were accepted, even against previous practice. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Neshama (Hebrew: נשמה‎) is a Hebrew word which means "soul" or "spirit". [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The Bahir also indicates that *Bakol* thus becomes a designation for the Shechinah. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Rashi quotes a midrash that teaches us that the *gematria,* numerical value of the Hebrew word *Bakol* is 52, equal to the numerical value of the Hebrew word *ben,* son. Avraham had enjoyed great wealth, happiness and longevity; yet, he still lacked the one thing truly necessary to continue his progeny, a grandson. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Bava Batra 16b records a dispute (found earlier in Tosefta Kiddushin (5:17 in R. Lieberman's edition) regarding the interpretation of Genesis (24:1) which states that God blessed Abraham "Bakol" (literally: with everything):

Rabbi Meir says: The blessing is that he did not have a daughter.

Rabbi Yehuda says: On the contrary, the blessing was that he had a daughter.

Others say: Abraham had a daughter and her name was Bakol. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. "And as for the midrashic teaching that 'Bakol' was the name of his daughter – [were this indeed indicated by the text,] it would require the addition of a prepositional '*Beit.*'" In other words, the teaching does not sit well with the language of the verse; if this were the intention, it would read, "God had blessed Avraham ***with Bakol*** (*be-Bakol*)." [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. In PRE, Eliezer in his journey from Kiryat Arba to Charan, condenses the seventeen-day trip to three hours, and upon his return “the earth contracted for him” נקבצה ((לפניו הדרך again, and he arrived the same day he left (PRE 16, cf. Ps-Jon on Gen. 24:62). Yaaqob, too, leaps from Beit El to Charan ‘in a single bound’, or the twinkling of an eye (“לחרן בא עין וכהרף, רגליו נשא ומשם ,”PRE 35). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. 5 In the Targum Yerushalmi on Gen. 28: 10, five miracles are said to have hap­pened to Yaaqob on this journey. “The second miracle consisted of Yaaqob, our Father, setting out from Beer Sheva and the path contracted before him and he immediately found himself residing in Charan”. Other biblical incidents that are similarly inter­preted to include the Israelites’ departure from Egypt, cf. Rashi on Ex. 12:37 and 19:4, and the journey of the twelve spies, cf. Rashi on Num. 13:25. See also B. Sotah 13b, which presents Deut. 34:1, namely Moses’ final climb, in a miraculous fashion. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. In the Targum Yerushalmi on Gen. 28: 10, five miracles arc said lo have happened to Jacob on this journey. “The second miracle consisted of Jacob, our Father, setting out from Beer Sheva and the path contracted before him and he immediately found himself residing in Haran”. Other biblical incidents that are similarly interpreted include the Israelites’ departure from Egypt, cf. Rashi on Ex. 12: 37 and 19: 4, and the journey of the twelve spies, cf. Rashi on Num. 13: 25. See also B. Soiah 13 b, which presents Dcut.34: 1, namely Moses’ final climb, in a miraculous fashion. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Bereshit (Genesis) 22:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Bereshit (Genesis) 24:63 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Rashi explains (28:11): “And our Rabbis interpreted the language of prayer ... and he changed the text and did not write and pray, to **teach you that the earth had jumped for him**.” Rabbeinu said that the word “leap” does not mean that a person arrives at a distant place in a short time, but that the earth itself has jumped to meet it. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Yaaqob’s family became a nation in Egypt. Their birth came when they were redeemed. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The Hebrew text of the Torah clearly states that Yaaqob reached not just "*a* place" but "*the* place" [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Why is HaShem called *Makom*? Because He is the place of the world and the world is not His place. (Yalkut Shimoni Vayetze *remez* 117) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Two generations earlier, when Avraham arrives at Mount Moriah, the site of *Akeidat Yitzchak*, the Torah states: *Va’ya’ar es hamakom mei’rachok*, “and he saw the place from afar”. By referring to both Mount Moriah and the location of Yaakov’s dream as “the place”, the Torah connects the two sites and indicates that they are one and the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Luz means ‘nut’. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Rashi on Bereshit (Genesis) 28:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Rashi on Bereshit (Genesis) 28:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Rashi on Bereshit (Genesis) 28:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid. 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ishbi-benob is a name which appears in the kri (וְיִשְׁבִּי) of the Masoretic Text at 2 Samuel 21:16. Kri is the term for the version of the text traditionally read aloud in synagogues. The ketiv (וישבו), the version written but not read aloud, reads somewhat differently, such that the opening words of the verse were not the name of the giant, but words that indicated that David and his soldiers stayed in (the city of) Nob. Literally “There is not for me (kri ‘us’)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. David confesses to his guilt in Shmuel alef (1 Samuel) 22:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Sotah 42b These four were born to Harafah in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants. Who were they? — R. Hisda said: Saph, Madon, Goliath and Ishbi-benob. ‘And they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants’, as it is written: And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her. R. Yitzchak said: The Holy One, blessed be He, spake, May the sons of the one who kissed come and fall by the hand of the sons of the one who clave. The name Ishbi beNob is split into two and interpreted homiletically. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. As an avenger, Ish = a man. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. When David, on his flight from Saul, received succor in Nob, (I Sam. XXI.) he was seen there by Doeg the Edomite. On the latter’s reporting this to Saul, he slew all the priests of Nob for treason (Ibid. XXII, 17-19), Doeg being his instrument. For this Doeg was banished from his portion in the future world (the phrase may also mean lost his life העולם מן נטרד; v. II Sam. I, 2; Pesik. ed. Buber III, 28b) and the defeat and death of Saul and his three sons at Mount Gilboa (I Samuel 30:1-6) was a punishment for the same. Thus, all this was indirectly caused by David. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Lit., ‘thy seed to cease’. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The name of a place (Rashi). Other interpretations: ‘to fill up breaches’; [‘to limit’, the word being a composite: ‘net and falcon’ (Levy)]. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Tehillim (Psalms) 28:37. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. David’s sister’s son, and brother of Joab, and one of the captains of David’s army. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. A gribah = one se’ah. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Lit., ‘The Assembly of Israel.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid. 68:14; v. Ber. 53b. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. V. supra 22a. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Hoping that the animal’s instinct would lead it to its master. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. That he might cover the distance quickly. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Orpah: The Moabite sister-in-law of Ruth (Ruth 1). In the Midrash, she is the mother of the giants Goliath and Ishbi-benob. It is unclear whether she herself was a gi­antess (Midrash Ruth). When a potential convert, with genuine intentions, is distanced from the Jewish people by being made to feel unfit, the consequences for the Jewish people can be disastrous. The same occurred to Orpah. When she was discouraged from joining the ranks of the Jews, her children were given vast powers over the Jewish people. One of these children was Goliath, another was Yishbi; both of them were massive warriors who focused their efforts on fighting against the Jewish people. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Pretending that it had merely fallen out of her hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. When David’s life was endangered in his confrontation with Ishbi-benob, according to Tractate *Sanhedrin* (95a), he asked Abishai son of Zeruiah, “Help us”. The nature of the help he received is recounted there: “That is as it is written: ‘Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid’ (II Samuel 21:17). Rav Yahuda said, quoting Rav, that he aided him by prayer,” and by virtue of this aid, David was saved. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. The alternative mentioned above. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. It is written: One son of Achimelech ben Achituv escaped, and his name was Evyasar. [Just as his negligence had resulted in the death of all but one of the Kohanim of Nob, similarly, all but one of his descendants were put to death by Asaliah.] [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. [Juvenal, Saturnalia, 6,542. alludes to the Jews selling wax-candles in Rome. V. Ginzberg, Legends. VI, 264, n. 87.] [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. At some distance from where Ishbi stood (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. A town near the border. [Horowitz, Palestine, p. 158 identifies it with El-Kabbu S.W. of Bethar.] [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Bethar, where the last stand in the Bar Kochba revolt was made (Neubauer, op. cit. 103). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Surely not; i.e., ‘we are too weak, even combined, to slay him.’ The remark was suggested by the place name Bethre, which means ‘by two’, as previously ‘let us arise’ — בי קום— was suggested by קובי. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. I.e., that she was dead. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Bereshit (Genesis) 24:42. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Since the journey could not be normally done in a day, the earth must have shrunk for him. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The first verse implies that he had reached Charan, the second that he had not. The Talmud therefore proceeds to reconcile the discrepancy. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 7:16. Rashi, in his teacher’s name, and the Vilna Gaon both delete the passage ‘an alternative . . . me’ as being out of place here. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. According to tradition, he was on the future site of the Temple. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. This exegesis is based on the use of the plus perfect בא, instead of the continuous imperfect ויבא, which is interpreted as implying that its setting was premature. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Bereshit (Genesis) 32:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Bereshit (Genesis) 24:42 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. This could only be tone miraculously. -Aram-Naharaim is Mesopotamia. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Tehillim (Psalms) 60:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. The last refers to Abishai, the son of Zeruiah. All these were supposed to have covered long distances in a miraculously short time (for Avraham v. supra, 39:8 and 42:3; for Yaaqob v. infra, 68), and that was metaphorically conceived to have taken place through the earth itself having quivered and trembled, closing up its gaps and thereby speeding the traveler. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:16 - This refers to an incident in the wars with the Philistines. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. It was naturally very heavy; the weight of his spear was three hundred shekels. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. I.e. surely it is strange that he was there in that very moment. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. V. Sanh. 95a for the whole story [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. According to BT Sanhedrin 95a-b, the land shrank for three people: Eliezer, Avraham’s majordomo, Bereshit (Genesis) 24:42-43; Yaaqob, Bereshit (Genesis) 28:10; and in the incident with Abishai, Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Ishbi-benob, was a Philistine giant who wanted to slay David but who was slain by Abishai. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. The two printed versions of the story, J. D. Eisenstein, (the Yemenite version) and jellinek (the Munich manuscript) have the word מרטף/(storeroom, cellar). Jastrow, Marcus, A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, (New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1950), 848. bt Sanhedrin 95a-b has a different rendition of parts of this story. In the Talmudic version in place of store-room or cellar we read, בי בדייא (olive press) with an alternative reading cited in the margin of the text, סדייא. The tightening of the olive press in order to squeeze out the olive oil fits the image here quite well. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Abishai ben Zeruriah was the son of King David’s sister. 1 Chron. 2:16. David restrained him from slaying King Saul with these words, “Don’t do him violence! No one can lay hands on YHWH’s anointed with impunity.” 1 Sam. 26:9. Midrash Al Yithallel reflects the Rabbinic account of Abishai ben Zeruriah’s aid to David found in Sanhedrin 95a. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Shmuel bet (II Samuel) 21:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Bereshit Rabbah Noach 34 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Kefitsat Haderech in the Jewish kabbalah describes a miracle wherein someone travels vast distances in short time. It is explained as the road “shrinking” or contracting so both ends are now closer, almost like a biblical wormhole that bends space. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Kefitsat Haderech in the Jewish kabbalah describes a miracle wherein someone travels vast distances in short time. It is explained as the road “shrinking” or contracting so both ends are now closer, almost like a biblical wormhole that bends space. Rashi says that this is accomplished throuth the pronouncement of HaShem’s name of 42 or 87 letters. Magic? [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. In mathematical physics, Minkowski space (or Makowski spacetime) is a combining of three-dimensional Euclidean space and time into a four-dimensional manifold where the spacetime interval between any two events is independent of the inertial frame of reference in which they are recorded. Although initially developed by mathematician Hermann Minkowski for Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism, the mathematical structure of Minkowski spacetime was shown to be an immediate consequence of the postulates of special relativity. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Rabbi Moshe Wolfson Shlita, Mashgiach Ruchani of Mesivta Torah Vodaath and Rav of Beit Midrash Emunat Yisrael in Brooklyn, is one of the most revered rabbinic figures of our time. His lectures, in both English and Yiddish, his sefarim, Emunat Etecha, and his book, Wellsprings of Faith (published by Feldheim), have inspired thousands to strengthen their emunah (faithful obedience), their attachment to Torah and prayer, and to strive ever higher in their service of HaShem. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Yoma 54b and many other sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. The Foundation Stone (Hebrew: אבן השתייה‎ Even ha-Shetiya or Hebrew: סֶּלַע‏‎ Selā‛) is the name of the rock at the center of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. It is also known as the Pierced Stone because it has a small hole on the southeastern corner that enters a cavern beneath the rock, known as the Well of Souls. There is a difference of opinion in classical Jewish sources as to whether this was the location of the Holy of Holies or of the Outer Altar. According to those that hold it was the site of the Holy of Holies, that would make this the holiest site in Judaism (Tanchuma, chapter 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. The Temple mount. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Hilchot Beit HaBechirah 6,16 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Shabbat 49b [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. The Zohar explains that these same 39 major activities were performed, as it would be, by HaShem when creating the universe. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. korban oleh = burnt offering [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Shechita is the Jewish religious and humane method of slaughtering permitted animals and poultry for food. It is the only method of producing kosher meat and poultry allowed by Jewish law. It is a most humane method as explained below. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Beit HaMikdash = Holy Temple [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Shemot (Exodus) 25:10. A cubit is approximately 20 inches [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Yoma 21a, Bava Batra 99a, Megillah 10b [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Pirkei Avot 5:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Pesachim 64b [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Herod Agrippas, also known as Herod or Agrippas I (Hebrew: אגריפס‬; 11 BC – 44 AD), was a King of Judea from 41 to 44 AD. He was the last ruler with the royal title reigning over Judea and the father of Herod Agrippas II, the last King from the Herodian dynasty. The grandson of Herod the Great and son of Aristobulus IV and Berenice, he was born Marcus Julius Agrippa, so named in honor of Roman statesman Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. He is the king named Herod in the Acts of the Apostles 12:1 (Acts 12:1). [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. see Midrash Eicha 1:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Pesachim 85b [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Pirke Avot 5:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Avot D’Rabbi Nathan, chapter 35 [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. The Ezrat Israel - The Courtyard of Israel, in the Temple. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. The Ezrat Kohanim - The Courtyard of the priests, in the Temple. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Bereshit (Genesis) 2:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Korban = sacrifical offering [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. The heritage of Avraham came through individuals, Yitzchak and Yaaqob. Only in the house of Yaaqob was there a community formed of twelve unique individuals. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Verse 67 says Yitzchak brought Rivka “*ha-ohelah Sarah imo*, to the tent Sarah his mother.” Ramban takes the ambiguous phrasing to mean this was the first time Sarah’s tent was pitched since her passing, as a sign of honor to Sarah and a function of the intensity of Yitzchak’s mourning for her. With the arrival of Rivka, he honored her by giving her his mother’s tent, and was finally comforted. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Hishtadlus = Our efforts [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. As an avenger, Ish = a man. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. When David, on his flight from Saul, received succor in Nob, (I Samuel 21) he was seen there by Doeg the Edomite. On the latter’s reporting this to Saul, he slew all the priests of Nob for treason (I Samuel 22:17-19), Doeg being his instrument. For this Doeg was banished from his portion in the future world (the phrase may also mean lost his life - v. II Samuel I:2; Pesik. ed. Buber III, 28b) and the defeat and death of Saul and his three sons at Mount Gilboa (I Samuel 30:1, 6) was a punishment for the same. Thus, all this was indirectly caused by David. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Lit., ‘thy seed to cease’. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. The name of a place (Rashi). Other interpretations: ‘to fill up breaches’; [‘to limit’, the word being a composite: ‘net and falcon’ (Levy)]. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Tehillim (Psalms) 18:37. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. David’s sister’s son, and brother of Joab, and one of the captains of David’s army. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. A gribah = one se’ah. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Lit., ‘The Assembly of Israel.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Ibid. 68:14; v. Ber. 53b. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Hoping that the animal’s instinct would lead it to its master. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. That he might cover the distance quickly. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Pretending that it had merely fallen out of her hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. The alternative mentioned above. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. [Juvenal, Saturnalia, 6,542. alludes to the Jews selling wax-candles in Rome. V. Ginzberg, Legends. VI, 264, n. 87.] [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Shmuel Beit (II Samuel) 21:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. At some distance from where Ishbi stood (Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. A town near the border. [Horowitz, Palestine, p. 158 identifies it with El-Kabbu S.W. of Bethar.] [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Bethar, where the last stand in the Bar Kochba revolt was made (Neubauer, op. cit. 103). [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Surely not; i.e., ‘we are too weak, even combined, to slay him.’ The remark was suggested by the place name Bethre, which means ‘by two’, as previously ‘let us arise’ —בי קום— was suggested by קובי. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. I.e., that she was dead. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Shemot (Exodus) 12:11; 12:13; and Isaiah 31:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Shemot (Exodus) 12:42 [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Judah Loew ben Bezalel, alt. Löw, Loewe, Löwe, or Levai, (between 1512 and 1526? – 17 September 1609) widely known to scholars of Judaism as the Maharal of Prague, or simply The Maharal, the Hebrew acronym of "Moreinu Ha-Rav Loew" ("Our Teacher, Rabbi Loew"), was an important Talmudic scholar, Jewish mystic, and philosopher who, for most of his life, served as a leading rabbi in the cities of Mikulov in Moravia and Prague in Bohemia. Due to his unprecedented impact on Jewish study, he is considered one of the most important rabbis of all times. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. unleavened bread [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. The sources which deal with this idea understand that what is being referred to here is literally one more moment in that state. Not more time in the previous phase of slavery and persecution in general, but very specifically more time on that last night in Egypt. The problem with more time in Egypt would not have been the contaminating effects of Egyptian impurity. That danger had long since ceased. No, the problem with more time in Egypt would have been more time itself! [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Likutei Sichot, vol. 8, p. 50 and Likutei Sichot, vol. 17, pp. 59ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Haggadah of the Sages by Shmuel Safrai [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Mekor Mayim Chaim, Chayei Sarah [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. The Midrash means that the community of Israel is composed of all attributes, all powers, or midot, such as hod, netzach, rahamim, din. No attribute can stand by itself. There must be a blending of all these powers, and the blend yields tiferet, glory; and when that comes about, it is called, “Bakol”. That is why the community of Israel is called “kallah” [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. cf. Bava Basra 16b-17a [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Siddur Tehillat HaShem, p. 93 [↑](#footnote-ref-165)