

Chayai Sarah 5774

BS"D Parashat Chayai Sarah 5774

Part A:

The major theme of my 3-volume book "With All Your Might" is the centrality of Eretz Yisrael in every parasha of the Torah. The Torah was given to the Jewish people to be kept in an intimate one-to-one relationship with HaShem within a national framework headed by a king, kohen gadol, Sanhedrin and prophets – all within the confines of the borders of Hashem's holy land.

There is a pasuk (verse) in our parasha which proclaims the eternal connection we have with Eretz Yisrael. When Eliezer asks Avraham regarding what he should do if no young woman from Avraham's family agrees to come to Eretz Yisrael, Avraham answers emphatically (24,6):

: וְאַבְרָהָם אָמַר אֶל־עֵלִיעֶזֶר אֲבִירָאָה אֲבִירָאָה אֲבִירָאָה אֲבִירָאָה אֲבִירָאָה

And Avraham said to him, "Be aware never to return my son there!"

Part B:

Several months ago, four men from the city of Atlit entered my bet kneset and began talking about the sanctity of Medinat Yisrael and Yerushalayim. They dressed and spoke like the average Israeli and were enthusiastic about their visit to the Old City and the fact that they were part of the kedusha of the Holy City, sitting no more than 100 meters from the place where the Bet Hamikdash once stood and will again stand.

For some unexplainable reason, I told them the following:

Eretz Yisrael has four recorded names in our sources:

- 1- Eretz Yisrael
- 2- Eretz Tzvi (beautiful)
- 3- Eretz Chemda (desired)
- 4- Eretz HaKodesh

The first letter of the four Hebrew names ,אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל ,אֶרֶץ צְבִי ,אֶרֶץ חֶמְדָּא
אֶרֶץ קֹדֶשׁ

spells out the word אֵיטְצַחַק

And Yitzchak never left Eretz Yisrael.

They got up, said goodbye and left the bet kneset. A moment later, one of the men returned and said: "I am discussing marriage with a Jewish woman who lives in New York, but her condition is we live in the United States. Because of what you told us today, I have decided to leave her but never to leave Eretz Yisrael – and my name is **Yitzchak!**"

Part C:

To understand what happened that instantaneously changed this man's future, we must go to our parasha.

Lavan and his mother did not want the young and beautiful Rivka to leave because of family reasons and because they, being loyal idol worshipers, did not want her to become part of the new, revolutionary monotheistic movement headed by their relative Avraham. When Eliezer requested to take Rivka back to Eretz Yisrael, Lavan and the mother replied (24,57-58):

אָבְרָהָם וְרִבְקָה אָמְרוּ לְלָוָן וְאִמּוֹתָיו וְאָמְרוּ לְרִבְקָה וְאָמְרוּ לְרִבְקָה:

Then they (Lavan and his mother) said, "We will call the young girl and ask her. So they called Rivka and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" And she replied, "I will go".

They were totally confident that, based on the family's beliefs and the education Rivka had received, she would never agree to travel 1000 kilometers with these strange people, to marry a man she never met before and to accept a life that was so foreign to her upbringing.

However, something happened within Rivka to awaken her soul. It broke out from the bubble of idolatry and sin which enveloped her family and her society, and an inner compulsion drove her to become a part of the God of Israel. Lavan and his mother were shocked by Rivka's response, and they were incapable of understanding what was happening in this young girl's soul.

The young man, Yitzchak with whom I spoke, was enveloped in his bubble of yetzer hara even considering leaving the holy land where he was born; but when he heard the message that his namesake, our father Yitzchak, had never left the holy land, it reverberated loud and clear in his holy neshama and he saw the truth of his life.

Part D:

Even if science were to solve all the mysteries of our universe, the Jewish soul would forever remain hidden and mysterious.

Why are some Jews impervious to any spiritual ideas, even willingly relinquishing and renouncing their 3500-year old Jewish tradition for a ham sandwich or a gentile wife or husband, while other Jews who were brought up far from Torah are attracted to HaShem's revelations at Sinai.

Why do some religious Jews cling to the galut, totally detached from the destiny of their brothers and sisters struggling to revive Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael? The best Jews in the galut might visit Israel once every few years and even write a "conscience" check to some organization here. And then there are the worst of our brothers helping our enemies

to destroy the Jewish homeland.

A recent survey of American Jewry reports that the intermarriage rate for non-Orthodox Jews is 71%, with two-thirds not belonging to a synagogue, one-fourth not believing in God and one-third erecting a Christmas tree in their home last year.

Nonetheless, there are holy Jewish souls in the galut who feel an inner compulsion to stake their future with the Jewish State, and like our mother Rivka uproot themselves and come home.

The call to Avraham of “lech lecha” – to leave his foreign home and come to Eretz Yisrael – is an ongoing cry, but only the souls of the very fortunate hear it.

It's not the economy, as some people think, it's the **neshama**.

What will awaken the Jews in the galut? Nothing short of a pending calamity or the realization that what they have been taught is a lie.

The galut is death for the Jewish people and Eretz Yisrael is life!

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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