

The Torah writes of Sarah's death.

**וַתָּמָת שָׂרָה בְּקִרְיַת אַרְבַּע הוּא חֶבְרוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֵא אַבְרָהָם לְסָפֵד לְשָׂרָה וּלְבָנֶיהָ:**

“And Sarah died in Kiryas Arba, it is Chevron, in the Land of Canaan. And Avraham came to eulogize for Sarah, and to bewail her.” (Bereishis 23:2).

“And Sarah died in Kiryas Arba.” What was she doing there? For this answer, it is important to follow Avraham's journey.

After Sodom's destruction, Avraham settled in the south, between Kadesh and Shur. (Ibid 20:1). Kadesh is at the southern border of Eretz Yisroel, on the border of the Sinai Peninsula. (See Bamidbar 20:14,23, 27:14). Shur is a desert town further north, facing Mitzrayim. (Bereishis 25:18). Avraham then traveled north to Gerar. (Bereishis 20:1). That is in the land of the Philistines.

After leaving Gerar, Avraham did not travel far, as King Avimelech offered him land anywhere near the Philistines (unlike Pharaoh who evicted Avraham from his country). (Ibid 20:15). He likely chose land between Kadesh and Bered (see *infra*). Avraham had a child (ibid 21:2) and then weaned him (ibid 21:8). It is logical that he did not travel with the newborn. Sarah then has her second dispute with Hagar and requests that this time Avraham evict Hagar and Yishmael. (Ibid 21:10). This displeased Avraham. (Ibid 21:11). It created a rift. At some point after this, Avraham then left his wife because at this very time Avimelech and Pichol made the treaty with Avraham. (Ibid 21:32). It took place not in the south, but in Beer Sheva. (Ibid 21:31). Even though the treaty was in Beer Sheva the pasuk says “Avraham dwelt in the land of the Philistines for many days.” (Ibid 21:34).

Beer Sheva is not in the Philistine land and he was just sojourning in Gerar. The pasuk uses the word וַיֵּגֵר and he dwelt, not the usual וַיֵּשֶׁב and he settled. What was the urgency for Avraham to agree to get into a treaty with Avimelech? Avraham had the upper hand, as he had Hashem on his side plaguing the Philistines. Avraham was a wealthy nomad and could go wherever he pleased. The answer is in the need to settle matters for Sarah. Clearly, Sarah and Avraham were separating over the dispute with Hagar and Yishmael. Avraham set up Sarah in Kiryas Arba. Beer Sheva is in between Gerar and Kiryas Arba. That is where Avimelech found Avraham and the treaty was struck. He then went to live apart from her – it says Avraham dwelt, not *they* dwelt. To prevent the Philistines taking revenge on Sarah while he was gone, he made the treaty. It is known that he did not live with Sarah in Kiryas Arba because he tells the authorities (Bnei Ches /Hittites) in Kiryas Arba “A sojourner and resident, I am among you.” (Ibid 23:4). He himself was a dweller, but his wife was a resident.

At the end of the test, it was only “Avraham” that “returned to his attendants.” (Ibid 22:19). He returned and settled וַיֵּשֶׁב in Beer Sheva. (Ibid). He settled halfway between Sarah in Kiryas Arba and Yitzchok, in the south.

Yitzchok lived in Be'er Lachai Ro'i. (Ibid 24:62). This place is between Kadesh and Bered. (Ibid 16:14). Bered is not mentioned elsewhere in the Torah but it believed to be further south than Kadesh, in the southern region of the Land of Canaan and Eretz Yisroel. Yitzchok is said to have settled there, after Avraham died. (Ibid 25:11). It is likely that Avraham had much wealth there still, from the treaties with the Philistines, and otherwise. Yitzchok managed it there, in the unclaimed lands.

"It is Chevron." Hebron / Chevron is the modern name. The Torah often uses terms for places that were only named later, to give the reader reference. When the Torah was completed by Moshe, the generation then had to understand the places. Another example is the treaty that Avraham struck with the Philistines took place in Beer Sheva. At the time it was unnamed and only named "Beer Sheva" after the treaty. However, the Torah calls it Beer Sheva, even prior to the treaty, as reference.

"In the Land of the Canaan." Avraham had every right to the burial plot, and yet he still paid for it with silver.

"And Avraham came." He came from Beer Sheva, where he was living, separate from Sarah. Yitzchok did not come. Yitzchok was living apart from his parents and further away.

"To eulogize for Sarah." Even though they were separated he treated her like a wife. He did not marry again until after she died. He may have disputed the treatment of his eldest son, but he respected her and treated her as a faithful companion and wife, until the day she died. He did give a eulogy on her behalf, for her honor, and to honor their decades together. Also, the eulogy was not for his honor. Some people give eulogies to aggrandize themselves through their clever oration. However, Avraham gave it purely for Sarah's honor.

"And he bewailed her." Only after giving a eulogy, did he mourn her loss. He sat shiva. The next pasuk says, "Avraham got up." (Ibid 23:3). He got up off the ground. Only after considering the person's life and merits is there true crying. Initially, there is crying for the loss of the person, and the shock or sadness of the news. That is a selfish crying. It is crying for how the news makes the crier feel. However, after the eulogy, and after considering the life, then is the crying *over the person*. Those tears are then for the deceased.

Avraham took a while to bury Sarah. Because she was living in a different place than where he was, he did not have a burial plot ready for her. He could not simply dig in land that he acquired or was settling in. He also waited to give Yitzchok a chance to come and mourn his mother. However, Yitzchok never made it. Yitzchok only found comfort later. After Yitzchok marries Rivkah it says, "and Yitzchok was comforted after his mother." (Ibid 24:67). Without attending the eulogy or the mourning, Yitzchok had no comfort over his mother's death. It was only after he married and he had a wife that could then carry on the duties and take the place of his mother, was Yitzchok comforted.