

Start, Continue and Evolve

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Our Parsha is the only one in which all the three Avot are alive (even though we read about Avraham's death last week, simple math shows us that he was alive when Ya'akov was born). It's also the only Parsha in the Torah that all the events described in it took place only in Eretz Israel. So, I think there's no better opportunity to look at different qualities we learn from our Avot and specifically through the lens of their journey to Eretz Yisrael.

Avraham is the first father and therefore everything he does is new. Monotheism, prayer, Hessed, education and hospitality are just a few from the things that Avraham was the first to establish. Of course there were individuals before Avraham who carried those traits and, but Avraham didn't learn from those people; he either received a direct order from Hashem or knew intuitively in his heart what is right and needed for the world. Therefore, it only makes sense that his journey to Eretz Yisrael starts with the famous revelation of Hashem, "Lech-Lecha". Even though his father, Terach, was also on his way to the land of C'naan before he died, Avraham does not follow his footsteps but rather follows Hashem to the place that he will show him (which happened to be the same place that his father was travelling to. But that is for another time).

Yitzchak is the son Avraham; "Avraham begat Yitzchak". It is the Torah's way to tell us that Yitzchak preserved and continued everything his father did. If Avraham tells him he needed to be sacrificed - Yitzchak accepts it. Avraham dug wells, Yitzchak dug wells too. Avraham lived in Grar, Be'er Sheva and Hevron, Yitzchak travels only between these places. Yitzchak never did something that his father didn't do beforehand. Yitzchak is the only father that never left Eretz Israel and dedicated his life to being his father's son.

Ya'akov has qualities from his father and his grandfather combined. He starts his life in Eretz Yisrael, but was forced into exile for 22 years. When he returns, he does not live where his father did, but rather in Bet-El, Sukkot and Schem. Also, he is the first one to make Aliyah as a family, leaving a comfortable life in the Galut, which is different than making Aliyah before you have the responsibility of being a parent.

In our generation, we are blessed to see people with similar journeys and relationships with Eretz Yisrael. There are those who are the first ones from their family to make Aliyah and initiate a process like Avraham, others who are second or third generation olim, who grew up in Israel and continuing their family legacy. And of course there are those who leave their comfort zone to go out to the unknown, only to return home with more - more Jews and more Torah - than they left with.

May Hashem bless us all to learn from the three fathers and to know when to be brave enough to start something new, how to keep things that we inherit from others and how to take both of those abilities, and with them expand and evolve our inner and outer world.

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