

The Location of the Garden of Eden

by HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

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There is a great mystery concealed in the Torah story about Avraham's burial of his wife Sarah. This mystery is not just another boring mystical mumbo-jumbo philosophical religious lesson that makes us want to yawn. No, this mystery is about a geological and geographical reality, spoken about for centuries in Torah literature and echoed in the literature of numerous cultures from around the world. What I am speaking about is the Garden of Eden being a real physical place and the secret of its actual location.

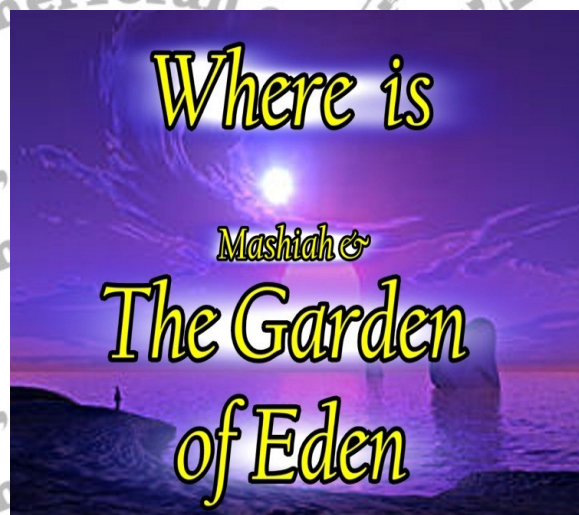
So, where is the Garden you may ask? And who is living there now? In order to answer these questions, let us delve into Torah, to the time of Sarah's death and to the place of her burial, the "double" Cave of Makhpelah in Hevron.

The Torah story is well known; Sarah, Avraham's beloved wife, mother of Yitzhak passes away at the ripe old age of 127. Avraham, wealthy as he is, still does not own any property in his newly adopted homeland then called Canaan (modern day Israel). In those days, there were no cemeteries. The dead were usually placed in caves which were sealed and protected as family tombs. Avraham sought to purchase such a cave for a family inheritance, where in later he would be buried along side his sons and grandsons. Indeed, this we know is what happened and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hevron is still a venerated place to this very day.

Now, of all the caves in the area, why did Avraham choose this specific one, which we know as Makhpelah. While the written Torah text does not delve into the issue (written Torah seldom delves into any issues), the Oral Tradition dating back to those days brings to us tremendous details, without which much of the written Torah will never be understood. The Oral Torah relates a story retold in many Torah commentaries. It goes something like this.

According to the Midrashic legend, which may or may not be historical, Avraham was out tending sheep one day when one of them ran off. He followed it through the hills and into a cave. Upon entering the cave Avraham was overwhelmed by the sweet fragrances coming out from deep within the cave. He enters deeper and to his surprise he finds that there is a second cave inside the first one and inside this second cave lay buried a man and a woman whose bodies have not decomposed at all. Amazed at this sight, Avraham prays to G-d for answers, what is this place and who is buried here. The male body then sits up and speaks, saying to Avraham that he is Adam and that this cave is the entrance way to Garden of Eden. This cave was the cave of Makhpelah and this episode was why Avraham specifically wanted it to for his own tomb for him, and his loved ones to follow. So goes the story.

Now, let us put legend aside and ask the necessary questions. If there is any legitimacy to Makhpelah being an entrance way to Eden, how is this physically possible? Gardens are placed where trees grow and flora flourishes. But these require the light of the sun in order for them to grow. We all know that caves are holes in the earth, some rather deep, some going for miles and miles, and yet what they all share is that they are deep underground without any exposure to sunlight. One cannot have a Garden growing in a cave. How then



is the cave of Makhpelah the entrance way to the Garden of Eden? Where on Earth is the Garden, or maybe better to ask where off the surface of the Earth is the Garden.

Torah Sages have forever acknowledged that the Garden of Eden is a physical location somewhere here on Earth. Since the earliest times, Makhpelah Cave has been associated with the Garden and is acknowledged to be the entrance way. Again, if there is more than legend to any of this, where is the Garden? To answer this we must delve into one of the greatest secrets guarded by the Sages of Torah. There is no better way to reveal it other than by being direct and outright.

There is an Inner Earth and the Garden of Eden is at the center of the Earth thousands of miles down, directly underneath the Cave of Makhpelah. The astounding proclamation is stated every so clearly in the Zohar and in other ancient sources.

The existence of Inner Earth should come as a surprise to no one. Such knowledge has long been known in ancient cultures for thousands of years, even expanding across the oceans. Even the ancient Native American Hopis know of these places. Even in the realm of science there have been some famous names who embrace what has become known as the Hollow Earth theory. Such scientists include amongst others Sir Edmund Haley, famous for the comet named after his discovery Haley's comet.

The existence of Inner or Hollow Earth is much more than a mere theological statement made by the Torah Sages. There have been numerous encounters between surface dwelling human beings and the numerous other types of life that inhabit the inner realms. Not all such encounters have been benign. Our Sages have outlined that Inner Earth is actually divided up in seven sections which in Hebrew are called the Sheva Artzot. These are enumerated in detail in the Zohar (Hashmetut 1, 254a; Hesed L'Avraham 2,4 and Emek HaMelekh, Sha'ar 21). While some modern so-called Rabbis want to describe the Sheva Artzot as all being land masses here on the surface of the Earth, those proclaiming this are doing so untruthfully. They are either not reading what our Sages have taught or they are lying about what our Sages have taught.

From a scholarly point of view we cannot tolerate or condone those who either misunderstand or lie about Torah source material. It disqualifies their legitimacy in the Rabbinate or from holding any kind of teaching position in the Torah world.

With regards to Torah teachings, when there is a disagreement amongst the classical sources about a thing, then one may choose which side to embrace based upon one's personal opinion (with the exception of issues of Halakha). When, however, there is no such disagreement, but only a proclamation about the reality of life, the universe and similar things, one who denies the teachings of the Sages is tantamount to denying the teachings of Torah and Judaism.

By doing so, such so-called teachers place themselves outside the bounds of acceptability. This is true regardless of whether they are members of the liberal or even most Haredi camps. Illegitimacy exists on the extremes of both right and left.

The Garden of Eden is said to be only one of the many locations in Inner Earth. The Zohar teaches that it was here that Adam materialized on Earth; it was from the center-most domain (Eden) in Inner Earth that he was cast out; it was in other domains in Inner Earth that he lived and that Kayin and Abel were born. It is even stated that Adam left numerous other progeny throughout Inner Earth over the centuries of his life.

The Zohar says that many who escaped the destruction of the Tower of Babel did so by relocating to Inner Earth. Inner Earth has long been said to be the domain of the fallen angels and the Nefilim mentioned in Genesis 6. Inner Earth is said to also be the domain of many animals which we have long considered to be mythological, such as the unicorn, the phoenix, the minotaur, centaur and dragon (ref. Hesed L'Avraham 2:4). Inner Earth inhabitants are said to come in many different shapes and sizes, from what we would call giants, to the likes of what would call hobbits; indeed, there is even said to be a head of two headed human beings. All these things are proclaimed by our Sages to be physically real.

The Zohar states that the Garden of Eden is a real physical place existing in Inner Earth. In the “Garden” there are said to be numerous “palaces.” This indicates that the Garden is no mere botanical location. It seems to imply that the Garden might not be a botanical domain at all, but rather a built-up domain similar to a modern city.

One of the “palaces” in the Garden is said to be the Palace of Mashiah. The Zohar teaches that Mashiah resides here and from here receives “powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men.” It is from here in the Garden that Mashiah sets out to Outer Earth to there fight the wars of HaShem and to conquer the surface for Him. As is clear from Zechariah 14, Mashiah comes from out of the sky with an army of angels. Ye, if Mashiah is coming from Inner Earth, from where come the angels with whom he meets and takes their lead? Do they also ascend with him from inner Earth? If so, when then is their means of their transport?

Questions abound. Answer are plenty throughout the many works of our Torah Sages. One point that our Sages make is certain. WE ARE NOT ALONE ON OUR EARTH.

There are many races of indigenous intelligent sentient entities living in Inner Earth. Many of these species know about us and many of them have interacted with us for a very long time. Some of these races are benign or even benevolent. Others on the other hand are nothing but trouble.

One of these troublesome races are referred to as the Nishaya, after the name of their domain. They are one of the “Shedim” (demons) spoken of by our Sages throughout the centuries. The Zohar and other literature describes their appearance as being frail, short, with a greyish skin-tone, no noses, just slits to breath. Allegedly they have no females of their species and thus seek our human females with which to procreate. Many might recognize the similarities between the Nishaya and modern day so-called extraterrestrials and so-called alien abductions. While these experiences are definitely real, still, they are not what people think they are. There is far too much more to discuss about this than can be related here. Maybe, we can pick up the discussion in future writings, then again maybe not. Maybe it is best for people not to know.

The Garden of Eden is thus accepted by our Sages as a physical domain deep inside Inner Earth. Yet, just as the Garden is located there so are there other domains, even the physical location of Gehinnom (Hell). These are not places of myth or the repose of the souls in the afterlife. They are accepted as being physical inhabited domains, whose inhabitants very much interact with us on a regular basis. They know all about us. It is we who live in ignorance of them. If there really is some sort of conspiracy of silence “out there” somewhere, then it is this that “they” are trying to keep secret. Maybe, they have very good reason.