

Journey Through Genesis  
**Bereisheit Chapter 20**  
Where Torah does Not Exist ©

By Dr. Akiva Gamliel Belk

Our discussion is in the loving memory of Helen, Gladys Ethel, Martha, John, Patrick, Ethel Channah, George, Gary Lee, Donald Wayne, Carrie, Stephen, Sharon, Florence Youman, Jeanne C. W. Pierre, Joseph Adam Pierre, Louella P. Bienvenu, Barbara Pierre, Terrill B. Thomas, Joyce Duff, Michael and Channah may they rest in peace.

Dear Ones a little later in our discussion I will explain why this discussion is entitled Where Torah Does Not Exist instead of where the Bible does not exist.

Dear Ones, have you or someone you know ever been asked one of the following questions?

Am I normal?

Do I see things differently than others?

Why am I different?

What makes me different?

Do my co-workers see me as being odd?

A few months back I chose to become a part of an organization that helps the community. They are known for doing a lot of good yet it is a crusty place to visit... My first visit was uncomfortable. They do a lot of things I have no interest in. I looked around. It was clear I was different. What made me different? Why did I feel uncomfortable? I felt like I was very odd to those around. Yet, they assist so many. I needed to participate with them hoping they would send some business my way. Maybe you work at a place that is not comfortable. Maybe you attend a school that is not comfortable... Maybe home is not too comfortable... Rebbetzin Revi relates a story every now and then when she arrived home after high school one afternoon and found her clothes in a single box on the front porch. Can we imagine what it must of felt like for a sixteen year old woman to be tossed out of the family home. How did the most precious of places become

such a place of pain? Dear Ones we look at our home as a place of safety from the world where those around us tenderly love us, support us, nurture us and encourage us. Our home is so to speak a safety net, God willing where we escape from the world.

Dear Ones many times throughout our lives we will be forced to operate in areas where we may feel uncomfortable. Will we be required to interact outside of our comfort zone?

Avraham was placed in a situation where he was forced to interact and associate with the people of Gerar. He was new to the area. Things got off to a rugged start. It was very uncomfortable for he and Sarah and their followers. Lets define why it was challenging. Our Sages say that Avraham moved because 'He saw the cities were destroyed and travelers ceased from passing by. Other sages say, Avraham chose to distance himself from Lot who had acquired a bad reputation because he was incestuous with his daughters. See Rashi - We do not know for sure what it was that caused Avraham to move.

Genesis 20.1-10

## בראשית פרק כ

א וַיֵּסַע מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶרְצָה הַנֶּגֶב וַיֹּשֶׁב בֵּין-קָדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיֵּגֶר בְּגֵרָר: ב וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחְתִּי הוּא וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גֵּרָר וַיִּקַּח אֶת-שָׂרָה: ג וַיְבֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בְּחִלּוֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הֲנִיךָ מֵת עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהוּא בָעֵלֶת בְּעַל: ד וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי הַגּוֹי גַם-צָדִיק תִּהְיֶה: ה הֲלֹא הוּא אָמַר-לִי אַחְתִּי הוּא וְהִיא-גַם-הוּא אָמְרָה אַחִי הוּא בְּתֵם-לְבָבִי וּבְנִקְיִן כִּפִּי עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת: ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים בְּחִלְמִם גַּם אֲנִכִּי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי בְּתֵם-לְבָבְךָ עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאֶחְשֶׁךְ גַּם-אֲנִכִּי אוֹתְךָ מִחֲטוּלִי עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נִתְתִּיךָ לְנֹגַע אֵלֶיהָ: ז וְעַתָּה הֲשֵׁב אֶשְׁת־הָאִישׁ כִּי-נָבִיא הוּא וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדְךָ וַחֲיָה וְאִם-אֵינְךָ מְשִׁיב דָּע כִּי-מוֹת תָּמוּת אַתָּה וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ: ח וַיִּשָּׁכֶם אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בְּבִקְרוֹ וַיִּקְרָא לְכָל-עֲבָדָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מְאֹד: ט וַיִּקְרָא אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַה-עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ וּמַה-חָטָאתִי לָךְ כִּי-הִבַּאתָ עָלַי וְעַל-מַמְלַכְתִּי חָטָאתָ גְדֹלָה מֵעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יַעֲשׂוּ עֲשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי: י וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ אֶל-אַבְרָהָם: **מָה רָאִיתָ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה**

1 And Abraham journeyed from there toward the Negev, and lived between

Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. 2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister; and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, you are but a dead man, because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a man's wife. 4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, Lord, will you slay also a righteous nation? 5 Said he not to me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother; in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. 6 And God said to him in a dream, Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; for I also kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for you, and you shall live; and if you restore her not, know you that you shall surely die, you, and all who are yours. 8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men were very afraid. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, What have you done to us? And in what have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done. 10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, What did you see, that you have done this thing?

Within our world we do business with and interact with people we may choose not to associate with. Abraham was placed in a situation like this when the King of Gerar took his wife, Sarah. What would you do if placed in the same situation?

Many of our classmates already know this but it bears repeating. Our Sages Teach that for every Letter and every Passuk / Verse and every phrase and Perik / Chapter of Ha Torah there is at least 5,000 different interpretations. I did not include the entire Bible here because the reference is only to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five Books are the Torah. The Torah has 613 Commands, i.e. Laws for B'nei Yisroel / the Children of Yisroel to Observe and about 80 Commands B'nai Noach / the children of Noah to follow. If we stop to think about it each of us are defendants of Noach / Noah and his wife, Na'amah. If we are God Fearing people we observe the Commands of Torah without even knowing what they are. For example one Command is to establish a form of Government, of laws, of courts, of justices and of police officers. Another is to be kind to animals. The point is that our society exists because we each observe Laws established in the Torah whether we realized it or not. This brings

us to the problem Avraham / Abraham was having in Gerar. The laws our Government sets up must be just laws. They must be fair Laws. They must apply equally to all. We learn from the Midrash some of the issues in Gerar. Before we discuss what the midrash says it is important to understand what the Midrash is. מִדְרָשׁ סֵפֶר The Book of Midrash is Rabbinical Commentary and Homiletic interpretation of the Scriptures. Midrashic Texts can either be Aggada ‘Story’ or Halacha meaning ‘the way’ of practice or Law. Having said this we are going to read a Midrash Aggada from The Midrash Says. The Bible Quotes the Book of Jasher, a Midrashic Text in Joshua 10.13 and again in 2 Samuel 1.18.

*After the destruction of Sedom, Abraham again changed his residence, moving his tent from Chevron to the Philistine city of Gerar. For what reasons did Abraham leave Charon?*

*1, Abraham was forced to forsake his old neighborhood because rumors of Lot’s actions with his daughters were circulating. Lot’s bad reputation also reflected in Avraham who was Lot’s uncle. Avraham, afraid of a Chilul Hashem, [profanation of the Divine Name] decided therefore to settle in a different place. 141*

*2. [Abraham’s] overwhelming desire to perform kindness made him seek guests constantly. After the destruction of Sedom the roads in that area were deserted. Avraham consequently returned to Gerar where there would be wayfarers for him to serve.142*

*Avraham knew that the inhabitants of Gerar were not God fearing. He therefore decided that for safety reasons, it would be better if he called himself Sarah’s brother, as he had done in Egypt. This precaution was to no avail, however, since the king of the country himself, Avimelech, arrested Sarah and had her forcibly taken to the palace. Once Sarah was in the palace, she told Avimelech the truth - “I am a married woman!” Avimelech would have ignored her words but the Lord sent the Angel Michael to prevent him from touching her.144 The Lord Appeared appeared to Avimelech in a dream and warned him, “The woman whom you have taken to the palace is married! According to the Seven Noachide Laws you would deserve to die if you were to live with her.” 145*

*Avimelech defended himself, saying to the Lord, “Is it fair to kill the innocent and the guilty a like? Do you punish those who sin intentionally, together with those who sin as a result of circumstances? 146*

*When I inquired about their relationship, her husband claimed that he was her brother. She did not object, which is equivalent to agreement 147. I took her to my house with innocent hands and integrity in my heart.”*

*“True,” The Lord answered him, “You were not informed of her true status when you took her to the palace and did it in all sincerity. However, you cannot claim to have innocent hands. As soon as she told you that she was married, it was your duty to restore her to her husband immediately. Your claim to righteousness is unjustified, since it was I who Prevented you from touching her. 148 Furthermore you are deserving of death for having kidnapped her (the transgression of the Noachide Law of ‘robbery”). And now, return this woman to her husband at once!” p179-181*

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מָה רָאִיתָ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה

What Do You See?

מָה רָאִיתָ

611 = 400 ת 10 י 1 א 200 ר

Torah

תּוֹרָה

611 = 5 ה 200 ר 6 ו 400 ת

I have provided the above information because each of us are required to Observe various Commands within Ha Torah. So this brings us to the point. There is a hidden message within the words of Avimelech. The hidden message is in the Hebrew Study of Jewish Mysticism known as Gematria. Gematria is a study of numbers based upon written Letters in the Hebrew Bible.. The Words Avimelech spoke to Abraham translated in to English are ‘What do you see?’ Mystically the Words ask, ‘Do you see Torah? Do you see [anyone] Observing the Torah?’ The answer is no! The Midrash points out doing what our Creator Requires was absent from the King down to the least in his kingdom. Where the Torah lives and is Observed may be an uncomfortable place for some... What do you think? Where Torah is nonexistent may be an uncomfortable place for others.

Blessing and Peace,

Dr. Akiva Gamliel and Rebbetzin Revi