

Parshat Vayeira

The Power of Eretz Yisrael

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The Ramban writes that even though there were societies more corrupt than Sodom, the reason Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed was because they were in Eretz Yisrael. The Holy Land cannot withstand being defiled. Therefore, it expels its inhabitants who defile it; i.e., Sodom and Gomorrah and the Canaanites.

The Pnei Yehoshua explains that if a person settles in Eretz Yisrael in order to do mitzvot, then he is unlikely to sin. Even if he does sin, he will most likely do Teshuva because of the merit of Eretz Yisrael. Rav Shmuel Rozovsky zt"l explains that the air of Eretz Yisrael is exceedingly keen and is exceedingly fertile. When one plants something in Eretz Yisrael it grows quickly. This is true whether one is planting seeds of Torah or, G-d forbid, planting sins. Sodom planted abomination in Eretz Yisrael and reaped its product of corruption.

This is true not only about mitzvot between man and G-d, but also about mitzvot between man and his friend. Sodom was a society that was self-centered and **not** caring about others, as it says in Yechezkel (16:49-50):

This was the sin of Sodom, your sister: She and her daughters had pride, glut of bread and peaceful serenity, but she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. And they were haughty, and they committed an abomination before Me, so I removed them in accordance with what I saw.

Avraham, on the other hand, was a person never thinking about himself, but was always running to help others, as it says: "I have loved him because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way Hashem, doing charity and justice." (Bereishit 18:19)

Being in Eretz Yisrael we have the ability to grow in leaps and bounds, while we can go lower than low. What ever we put our efforts into – we will reap its harvest.