

Of Trees and Men

Genesis Chapter 18 בְּרֵאשִׁית 18

א וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה, בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵי; וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח-הָאֵהָל, כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם.

1 And the LORD appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

ב וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו, וַיֵּרָא, וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים, נֹצְבִים עָלָיו; וַיָּרָץ, וַיִּקְרָאֲתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֵהָל, וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ, אַרְצָה.

2 and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed down to the earth,

And the Lord appeared to him in Elonei Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he raised his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the ground. And he said, my lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away.

(Bereishit 18:1-3)

The standard biblical commentators who interpret Scripture according to the plain sense of the text have also tried to clarify the relationship between the first verse and the verses that follow.

The Ramban cites the position of the Rambam in his *Guide of the Perplexed* that the opening verse serves as a heading for the rest of the passage. In essence, then, we are dealing with a vision announced by the first verse, the content of that vision being the story of the three angels. In this way, all the aforementioned difficulties are resolved.

The Ramban rejects this approach which interprets all the stories of Divine revelation as abstract, spiritual visions. He raises an objection from the account of Ya'akov's struggle with the angel: If we are dealing with a spiritual vision and not a real, physical encounter, why does Yaakov emerge from the vision with a limp?

The *parashah* opens with God's appearance to Avraham at *Elonei Mamre*. Immediately afterwards, in the very next verse, וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו, וַיֵּרָא, וְהִנֵּה Avraham raises his eyes and sees three men. The first verse seems to be saying that God revealed Himself to Avraham, but the content of this revelation is totally missing. The purpose of this revelation is unclear, as is the message given to Avraham, for immediately in the next verse, Scripture moves on to another story – Avraham's three guests.

*"And the Lord appeared to him in **Elonei Mamre**, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." What is [meant by] "in the heat of the day"? Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina said: That day was the third day after Avraham's circumcision, and the Holy One, blessed be He, came to ask about Avraham's [welfare].*

(Bava Metzia 86b)

The purpose of the revelation, according to R. Chama, was to visit the sick, God wishing to pay Abraham a visit three days after his circumcision. This explains why no message or words accompany this revelation, it is consisting exclusively of God's very appearance to Abraham.

The next verse, וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו, וַיִּרְא, וְהִנֵּה according to this understanding, is unrelated to the revelation, and no connection should be drawn between the story of Abraham's guests and the revelation that immediately precedes it. According to this approach, not only are the two stories unconnected, but there is even a certain degree of dissonance between the two. For verse 2 opens with the words, "And he raised his eyes and looked," without even a hint that the revelation described in the previous verse had terminated.

The omission of Abraham's name and the absence of any description of the situation or place in the second verse do, however, tie the raising of Abraham's eyes to the appearance of God in the previous verse. We are, therefore, faced with a serious difficulty: Abraham experiences a revelation of the Divine, and at that very moment he raises his eyes to the crossroads in search of wayfarers! Is this the proper way for Avraham to have conducted himself vis-a-vis God?

Anticipating this question, Rav Yehuda makes a most astonishing comment:

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: Hospitality to wayfarers is greater than welcoming the presence of the *Shekhinah*, for it is written: "And he said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, etc." Rabbi Elazar said: Come and observe how the conduct of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like that of mortals. The conduct of mortals [is such that] an inferior person cannot say to a greater man, Wait for me until I come to you; whereas in the case of the Holy One, blessed be He, it is written: "And he said, My Lord, if now I have found, etc." .. (*Shabbat 127a*)

*Rav Yehuda understands that Abraham, to use modern terminology, put God "on hold." "Wait until I deal with my guests; I will get back to you as soon as I have finished with them" is the way Rav Yehuda interprets Avraham's words, "If now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away."*¹

The Ohr HaChayim has an objection to the semantic order of the first verse, and the omission of any revelation to Abraham. His solution is brilliant. Once God appeared as the Schechina to him "Vayera" is already a revelation, "elav" upon Abraham for good, then only we identify the subject "YKVK".

¹ <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/parashat-vayera-and-lord-appeared-him-and-he-raised-his-eyes-and-looked>

• Rav Itamar Eldar

1. וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי ה' — **HASHEM APPEARED TO HIM IN THE PLAINS OF MAMRE WHILE HE WAS SITTING AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY.**

In the Hebrew form of this phrase, וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי ה', the word אֱלֹהֵי (to him) is placed between the words וַיֵּרָא (appeared) and ה' (Hashem), so that it literally reads: *He appeared to him — HASHEM.* Or HaChaim focuses on this unusual sentence structure:

יש לִדְעַת — We need to understand — לָמָּה שִׁינָה הַכְּתוּב לְהַקְדִּים הַרְוָאָה קוֹדֵם הַנִּרְאָה שֶׁהִתְחִיל לְדַבֵּר בּוֹ — why the Torah changed from its usual style and stated the word *eilav*, which refers to the one to whom the appearance was made (i.e., Avraham), before stating the word *Hashem*, which refers to the one making the appearance. The reason why it would make sense to first mention the one making the appearance is that the verse started speaking about him (*vayeira*, “and he appeared”), so it should identify *who* made the appearance before it goes on to say to whom he appeared! שְׁהִיָּה לוֹ לִזְמַר וַיֵּרָא ה' אֱלֹהֵי — Seemingly, [the verse] should have stated the following: “*Vayeira Hashem* (*Hashem appeared to him*).”^[1] — Indeed, we find that this is how [the Torah] speaks in all the earlier places where it refers to Hashem appearing to Avraham, for example: “וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל אַבְרָם וְגו' לִירוּעָךְ וְגו'” — *HASHEM appeared to Avram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land”* (above, 12:7), “וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל וְגו' אֲנִי אֵל שַׁדַּי” — or, *HASHEM appeared to Avram and said to him, “I am El Shaddai; walk before Me and be perfect”* (ibid. 17:1). In both of these cases, the verse puts the two words *vayeira* and *Hashem* together (*vayeira HASHEM el Avram*), and does not interject *el Avram to Avram*) between *vayeira* and *Hashem*. Why, then, is the verse arranged differently here?

Having asked about the sentence structure, Or HaChaim points out a difficulty regarding the content of the verse:

מָה נֶאֱמַר לְאַבְרָהָם בְּנִבְוָאָה זוֹ — what was said to Avraham in this prophecy.^[2] The verse just says that Hashem appeared to Avraham, but it does not

[Hashem] had come to visit [Avraham], who was ill from the pain of his *bris milah* (circumcision). Accordingly, Hashem in fact did *not* come to give a prophetic message to Avraham, but simply to visit him as one would visit the sick. אֲלָא שְׁלֵא הוֹצֵר רְמֵז לְדַבֵּר זֶה בְּכְתוּב — However, this cannot be the simple explanation, as there is seemingly no indication to this fact in the verse.

Or HaChaim suggests an approach to the verse that answers both of his questions:

וְנִרְאָה כִּי בְּיוֹנֵת הַכְּתוּב הִיא — It seems correct to say that the Torah's intention in phrasing the verse this way is שְׁבֵא לְהוֹדִיעַ שֶׁהִשְׁרָה ה' שְׁכִינְתוֹ עָלָיו וְנִשְׁעָה מְרַבְּבָה לְשִׁכְנָה — that it comes to inform us that, by appearing to Avraham at this time, Hashem was resting His *Shechinah* upon him so that he became a “chariot” of the *Shechinah*, וְתִמְצָא שְׂאֵמְרוֹ וְלֵאבֹת מְרַבְּבָה לְשִׁכְנָה — for you find that [our Sages], of blessed memory, stated (*Bereishis Rabbah* 82:6): The Patriarchs are the chariot of the *Shechinah*.^[3] — This is what is meant here when it says, *vayeira eilav HASHEM*; it means that Hashem revealed His *Shechinah* to him, resting it upon him continuously. וְלָמָּה הַקְדִּים תִּיבַת “אֱלֹהֵי” לְהוֹצֵר ה' — For this reason, [the verse] states the word *eilav* immediately after the word *vayeira*, before stating the word *HASHEM*, לִזְמַר שְׁנִתְגַּלִּית — to indicate that this was not a momentary appearance for a specific purpose, after which Hashem's Presence would depart, but rather an appearance that became part of Avraham's essence, for the *Shechinah* was now revealed upon [Avraham] on a permanent basis. מָה שְׁלֵא הָיָה נִשְׁמַע בְּאוֹמְרוֹ — This is something that would not have been understood had [the verse] followed the typical format and said, “*vayeira HASHEM eilav*,” כִּי ה' יִפְסִיק בֵּין הַגִּילּוֹי לְמַתְגַּלָּה בּוֹ — for then the word *HASHEM* would have separated between the word for the revelation (*vayeira*) and the one upon whom the revelation was made (*eilav*), and there would be no indication that there was a permanent revelation forged here. — Understand this point.^[4]

The Ohr HaChayim has the same issue as the talmud, but his solution is a mystical one. in a mystical way, Abraham has become incarnated with the Schechina and that is sufficient. No words are now needed. There was no other communication.

This is the way that R. Levi Yitzchak of Berdychew describes the experience:

"And the Lord appeared to him in Elonei Mamre, etc." We must understand: Why does it not say, "And the Lord appeared to Avraham"? Why is [Avraham's] name not mentioned?

It seems that the blessed Creator pours bounty upon His creatures, but there remains bounty that He has not yet contracted in the worlds. Now, the bounty that has been contracted in the worlds is in the letters.

For example, regarding the world of the Serafim, the contraction is in the letters [of the word] Serafim. And similarly, with all the worlds. And similarly, with the lower world, each person according to his letters.

That is, to Avraham [the bounty comes] from the contraction of Avraham, and similarly with each person.

Now, a person who serves God, may He be blessed, with devotion, sheds [his] letters and adheres to the bounty that has not yet contracted into letters. Avraham Avinu, may he rest in peace, circumcised himself in old age, and served the Creator, may He be blessed, with devotion.

Thus, he shed himself of his letters, because he became attached to the bounty that had not yet been contracted into letters, and he was no longer called by his name at all.

This is [the meaning of] "And God appeared to him," that he was not called by his name at all.

(Kedushat Levi, Vayera)

R. Levi Yitzchak notes that Avraham's name is omitted from the opening verse: "And the Lord appeared to him," rather than "And the Lord appeared to Avraham."

R. Levi Yitzchak's understanding of this phenomenon fits in well with what was stated above. Abraham's service of God involved communion and total devotion, and rose above human bounds, which find expression in our names that are comprised of letters. Avraham shed the individuality expressed by his name and conjoined with the Divine profusion that knows no bounds.

This is an experience that is above and beyond the natural world, and all of the natural world becomes meaningless next to it. This communion with the infinite is void of words and content. Since there are no longer two beings but only one, it is irrelevant to speak of a message or contents.

The Degel Machaneh Ephrayim answers the Or Hachayim's question differently. For the Degel, the very notion of incarnation of the Schechina has both positive and negative consequences...

או יאמר לתרץ קושיות האוה"ח למה נשתנה כאן מבכל מקום שהקדים כאן הרואה להנראה שהיה ראוי לומר וירא ה' אליו וי"ל כי ידוע שהאבות ע"ה הם תקנו כל אחד מה שפגם אדם הראשון בעץ הדעת טוב ורע ואברהם אע"ה היה הראשון לתיקון זה וזה י"ל שמרומז בפסוק וירא אליו דייקא שהוא היה התיקון לעץ הדעת וזהו שנתראה ונתגלה אליו ה' באלני אותיות באילן ממרא היינו באותו אילן שאדה"ר היה ממרא בו ציווי הש"י תיקן אברהם זה שנתהפך מרע לטוב ואדרבא משם נגלה אליו האלקי' כי הוא תיקן מה שגרם אדה"ר שנתערבו טוב ורע וצריך להפריש הטוב מן הרע ולהסיר הרע ולעשותו טוב כמ"ש סור מרע להסיר הרע מהרע שבו ועשה טוב היינו לעשותו טוב וזהו שתיקן אברהם ונעשה טוב ולכך נתגלה אליו ה' שם והבן

To resolve the Or ha-Chayim's objection, as to why here the word sequence of "YKVK" and "elav" which should have been in the reverse... לומר וירא ה' אליו....

Now it is known (Zohar III:111 and Tikun Zohar 102) that the Patriarchs each tried to "fix" the sin of Adam, with the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Now Abraham was the first patriarch to perform this tikkun...for he fixed what Adam had caused which was the admixture of good and evil. For it was now necessary to separate the evil from the good, to isolate the evil and remove the evil and make it good, as cited in Psalms, (34:15)

טו סור מרע, ונעשה-טוב; בקש שלום ורדפהו. **15 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.**

Meaning remove the evil from the evil within and **נעשה-טוב** transform it to the good, this is what Abraham accomplished therefore God revealed Himself to him there.

Now the Degel must tell us how he accomplished this task since he demands we all engage in the same spiritual activity to fix the sin of Adam.

או יאמר לתרץ קושיות האוה"ח שהתורה בכוונה שינתה הלשון כאן לרמוז בזה ענין עמוק כי יש לפעמים יושב הצדיק בין כמה אנשים ומדבר עמהם כמה דברים גשמיים וסיפורים שכפי הנראה הם דברים בטלים ובאמת הצדיק ההוא היושב הוא דבוק מחשבתו בה' והדיבור שמדבר אף שלהם הם גשמיים ודברים בטלים והוא חושב ומסתכל בזה דברים רוחניים דברים קדושים וכן בכל סיפורי העולם שמספרים לפניו ומדברים עמו בכל ענינים הוא מסתכל תמיד ענינים קדושים באותן הדיבורים וכמו ששמעתי מן אא"ז נ"ע זל"ה שהיה שמה שאומות העולם משוררים לידיד כולם הם בחי' יראה ואהבה בהתפשטות מעילא לתתא בכל המדרגות התחתונים וזה י"ל שמרומז בפסוק וירא אליו ה' באלני ממרא אלני היינו בני אדם ע"ד כי האדם עץ השדה וממרא לשון סורר ומורה והיינו אפילו באותם בני אדם שהם בדיבורם ממרים להש"י והם רשעים אעפ"כ וירא אליו דייקא להצדיק הדבוק תמיד בה' הוא רואה תמיד הש"י בענינים ההם והוא רק אליו ולא להם כי הוא א' והוא יושב היינו אף שהוא יושב עמהם כאחד מהם מ"מ הוא לשון נסתר שהוא בהסתר ובהעלם בעולם המחשבה פתח האוהל כדאיתא בזה"ק דא יראה והיינו מחמת שהוא דבוק תמיד ביראת ה'

To resolve the Or ha-Chayim's objection, he can say that the Torah intentionally uses an unusual formulation here in order to allude to a profound idea. For sometimes a Tzadik sits in a group of people and speaks to them of certain material matters and relates stories that appear to be vain.

But in truth that Tzadik who is sitting there is attached in his thought to God, and the words that he utters, while to them they appear material and vain, he sees and regards them as holy and spiritual. And similarly, regarding all the down-to-earth stories that people relate to him and all the matters that they tell him, he always sees the holy aspects in these utterances.

As I heard from my grandfather (BESHT) that the songs that the nations of the world sing are all the aspect of love and fear [of God] spreading down from up above to all the lower levels. This is alluded in the verse, "And the Lord appeared to him in **Elonei Mamre** (the terebinths of Mamre²). Elonei refers to people, as in:

יט כִּי-תִצּוֹר אֶל-עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם
עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ, לֹא-תִשְׁחִית אֶת-עֵצָהּ
לְקַדְּחַם עָלֶיהָ גֵרְזֵן--כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכֵל, וְאִתּוֹ לֹא
תִכְרֹת: כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה, לְבָא
מִפְּנֵיךְ בְּמִצּוֹר.
19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; **for is the tree of the field man**, that it should be besieged of thee?

([Devarim 20:19](#)):

"For man is the tree of the field. And **Mamre** is in the sense of "stubborn and rebellious (more)." That is, even those people who rebel against God with their words, and are wicked, nevertheless, "And He appeared to him."

This refers specifically to the Tzadik, who always cleaves to God – he always sees God in these matters. And it is just "to him" and not to them, for he is one. "As he sat" – that is, even though he is sitting with them, like one of them, nevertheless, he is by himself and in secret in the world of thought.

Degel Vayera DH "Oh Yomar"

The Degel teaches us that when the Tzadik descends to a lower level, he does not really go down. The Tzadik continues to cleave to the Shekhinah, and when he speaks of and listens to mundane matters, he lifts and elevates them. Unlike Reb Levi Yitzchak his contemporary, the Degel's Abraham who also cleaves to God, leaves that state of dveykus and engages with mere sinful mortals and their idle chatter, based on his great grandfather's teaching regarding the music of the nations. Their music too, has within it something divine if fallen.

(I am reminded of Rav Soloveitchik's explanation of why the Torah tells us that Abraham planted an Eshel. The Torah relates this detail because Abraham taught the world that through this tree, one could perceive the Master of the Universe. God Himself controls the flowering and the growth of the

² Terebinths identified with Tamarisk tree? <https://www.sightmagazine.com.au/lifestyle/greensight/9660-greensight-the-eshel-a-biblical-shade-tree-and-metaphor-for-israel...see> also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamarix_aphylla

tree, the falling and withering of its leaves in autumn, and the budding and growth of new leaves and luscious fruit in the spring.

Organic life is revealed through the tree, and thus through the tree God is perceived as well. Therefore the Torah tells us in Parshat Shoftim, "*Ki Adam Etz Hasadeh*" (A human being is like a tree of the field.) Both the human being and the tree need lots of tender loving care in order to grow and flourish.

Avraham planted the Eshel tree and from under that tree, "...he called out there in the Name of G-d of the Universe." Abraham proclaimed that God is not just the God of the tree or only of man's immediate surroundings, but He is also the God of the entire, vast and endless Universe.)

It seems, however, that Abraham's ability to see is even more profound than the way we have thus far described it. The Degel goes deeper:

וישא עיניו וירא ע"ד דע מה למעלה ממך וזש"ה וישא לשון הגבהה למעלה היינו שהסתכל בעיניו וחשב שבכל העינים
יש יראה ואהבה בהתפשטות מעילא לתתא ושורשם למעלה כנ"ל והבן

"And he lifted his eyes and saw." In the sense of "Know what is above you" (Avot 2:1). This is what Scripture states: "And he lifted," a term of raising. That is, he saw with his eyes, and contemplated that in everything there is fear and love [of God] spreading down from up above, their root being up above, as stated. Understand this.

(Degel Machaneh Ephrayim, Vayera)

This raising of eyes, according to the Degel, is not only the physical act of lifting the eyes upward. Rather, it involves the seeing inwards a deep and inner understanding how the experience of "*And the Lord appeared to him*" spreads, in the words of the Degel "from heaven to earth" and becomes clothed in the form of three men and the *mitzva* of welcoming guests. This inward perception is not a Soloveitchik-type of philosophical conclusion about God and the world rather a seeing of God inside everything in the world.

In the background of all that we have said thus far lies the midrash that describes how Abraham abandoned the Shekhinah for a short time in order to welcome his guests. We can now say, based on the words of the Degel that Avraham never ceased standing before the Shekhinah. Abraham's unique lifting of his eyes is the ability to remain joined to the infinite even when coming down to earthly reality. This ability depends upon the inner understanding that the Degel attributes to Abraham in the "raising of his eyes", his understanding how the infinite becomes embodied in a this- or as I prefer to call it, incarnated in a worldly situation.³

The Degel has the result of the religious/mystical experience going down, down into the blotta!

³ <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/parashat-vayera-and-lord-appeared-him-and-he-raised-his-eyes-and-looked>

• Rav Itamar Eldar op cit

Now comes the radical Degel Torah:

ויטע אשל בבאר שבע

וּדְרָשׁוּ חֲז"ל אֲכִילָה שְׁתִּיָּה לִוְיָהּ יְבוּאָר בְּדֶרֶךְ רִמְזָה כִּי אֵיטָא בְּזוּהַ"ק ת"ח אָדָם חָבַב בְּעֵץ הַדְּעַת : **ויטע אשל בבאר שבע** וְאֲבָרָהִם תִּיקֵן בְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאוֹדַע רִזָּא דְמַהִימְנוּתָא ע"ש וְהַעֲנִין הוּא כִּי יָדוּעַ כִּי אֲעַע"ה הִיָּה תִיקוּן שֶׁל אָדָם הָרָאשׁוֹן וְאָדָם חֲטָא בְּעֵץ הַדְּעַת טוֹב וְרַע וְאֲבָרָהִם הִפְךָ הָרַע וְעָשָׂה אוֹתוֹ טוֹב כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב סוּר מֵרַע וְעָשָׂה טוֹב כְּנֹזְכֵר לְעֵיל שִׁירָאָה לְהַסִּיר מֵהָרַע וְלַעֲשׂוֹת מֵהָרַע טוֹב ד"מ אִם נּוֹפֵל בְּמַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֵיזָה הִירָהוּר זְנוּת ח"ו יָדַע שֶׁזֶה הִיא מַחֲמַת שֶׁהַשׁוֹרֵשׁ שֶׁהוּא בְּחַי' חֹסֵד נִפְל וְאִין מִי לְהַקִּימוֹ וְלִשְׁךָ יִתְגַּבֵּר כֹּאֲרִי לַעֲשׂוֹת חֹסֵד עִם הַשְּׂכִינָה כְּבִיכּוֹל בְּצַדִּיקָה וּג"ח וְשָׂאֵר דְּבָרִים זֶהוּ וְזֶהוּ אֵיזָהוּ חֹסִיד הַמִּתְחַסֵּד עִם קוּוֹנוֹ וְכֵן כָּל הַבְּחַי' שֶׁל כָּל הַסְּפִירוֹת כְּנוֹדַע בְּשֵׁם אֲא"ז נ"ע זְלִל"ה

וּבְאָדָם הָרָאשׁוֹן כְּתִיב פֶּן יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלִקַּח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְשׁו' כִּי לִפִּי שֶׁחֲטָא בְּעֵץ הַדְּעַ' לֹא הִנִּיחוּהוּ לִיגַע בְּעֵץ הַחַיִּים אֲבָל אֲבָרָהִם שֶׁתִּיקֵן בְּחַי' עֵץ הַדְּעַת זָכָה לְעֵץ הַחַיִּים זֶה י"ל בְּפִירוּשׁ הַפְּסוּק וִירָא אֵלָיו ה' בְּאֵלָיו מִמֵּרָא הֵינִינּוּ בְּאוֹתוֹ אֵילָן שֶׁחֲטָא בּוֹ אֲדָה"ר מִמֵּרָא מִלְּשׁוֹן סוּרֵר וְמוֹרָה אֲבָרָהִם אֲבִינּוּ תִיקֵן אוֹתוֹ אֵילָן וְשֵׁם נִגְלָה יֵאלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים וְהוּא הִיָּה חֹסִיד הַמִּתְחַסֵּד עִם קוּוֹנוֹ כִּנ"ל לְכָךְ אֵלָיו מִסְפָּר צ"א הוִי"ה אֲדַנ"י כִּי הַמִּתְחַסֵּד עִם קוּוֹנוֹ נִעֲשֶׂה יַחֲוֹד קַב"ה וְשִׁכְנִיתָהּ אַחֲרָיִךְ אֲשֶׁר תִּיקֵן לְעֵץ הַדְּעַת זָכָה לְעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְזֶהוּ וְיִטַע אֲשֶׁל וְאֵיטָא בְּזוּהַר שֶׁהוּא עֵץ הַחַיִּים וְזֶהוּ אֲכִילָה שְׁתִּיָּה לִוְיָהּ כּוֹלֵם ע"ש הַיַּחֲוֹד כְּמוֹ הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר הוּא אוֹכֵל שְׁתִּיָּה ג"כ מוֹרָה עַל הַיַּחֲוֹד כְּמוֹ אֵל יִשְׁתָּה אָדָם בְּכּוֹס זֶה וְלִוְיָהּ כְּמוֹ מַעוּר אִישׁ וְלִוְיָהּ וְהֵינִינּוּ שִׁזְכָּה בְּכָל הַבְּחִינֵי לִיחַד קוּב"ה וְשִׁכְנִיתָהּ זֶהוּ שֶׁרְמָזוֹ חֲז"ל אֲעַע"ה אוֹכֵל חוּלִין בְּטַהֲרָה הִיָּה וְהָבִין

:

33 And Abraham planted a tamarisk-tree⁴ in Beer-Sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.
בְּבִאָר, אֲשֶׁל, לֵג וְיִטַע, בְּבִאָר, וְיִקְרָא-שֵׁם--בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, אֵל עוֹלָם.

⁴ Interesting thing word "אשל"(eshel)(which here translated as tamarisk) is only used 3 times in the Bible two times in the 1 Samuel 22:6 and 31:13

וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׁאוּל--כִּי נֹדַע דָּוִד, וְהַאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ; וְשָׁאוּל יוֹשֵׁב בְּגִבְעָה מִתַּחַת-הָאֲשֶׁל בְּרָמָה, וְחַנִּיתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ, וְכָל-עַבְדָּיו, נֹצְבִים עָלָיו. **6** And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him; now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the **tamarisk-tree** in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.

where it means some type of tree (tamarisk) Where they buried King Saul and his sons:

ג וַיִּקְחוּ, אֶת-עַצְמוֹתֵיהֶם, וַיִּקְבְּרוּ תַחַת-הָאֲשֶׁל, בְּיַבֶּשֶׁת; וַיִּצְמוּ, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים. {פ} **13** And they took their bones, and buried them under **the tamarisk-tree** in Jabesh, and fasted seven days. {P}

but Rashi doesn't like this version because it is not entirely understood why would Abraham all over sudden plant tamarisk tree so Rashi trying to find another solution by concentrating on the word 'planted' rather on "eshel"

See also: Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Sotah 1:29 (Gen. 21:33):

And Abraham planted a tamarisk-tree in Beersheba. Said Resh Lakish : "Infer from this that he made an orchard and planted in it every kind of delicacies." R. Juda and R. Nechemia both differ as to the explanation of this passage. One says that the passage refers to an orchard and the other says that it refers to an inn. It is evidently right according to the one who explains it an orchard; for the passage says, Vayita, (and he planted) but as to the one who explains it an inn, what is the meaning of Vayita? (and he planted) ? Such an expression we find in the

And as the rabbis have explained Midrash Tehillim: (37), the *roshei tevot* of **Eishel**, represent eating, drinking and accompanying the guests (*Aleph/shin/lamed..achilah, shesiya and levaya*). As is noted in the Zohar (I:102b)

וַתֵּא וְזֵי, כִּד חֵב אָדָם, בְּעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרַע חֵב, דְּכַתִּיב וַיִּמְעַץ הַדַּעַת
 וְגו' וְאִיהוּ בֵּיה חֵב וְגַרְם מוֹתָא לְעֵלְמָא. מֵה כְּתִיב וְעַתָּה פֶּן יִשְׁלַח יְדוֹ
 וְלִקְח גַּם מִעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְגו'. (וְגַרְם מוֹתָא לְכָל בְּנֵי עֵלְמָא) וְכִד אֶתָּא
 אֲבָרְהָם בְּאֵילָנָא אֲחֵרָא אֲתִקִּין עֲלֵמָא דְהוּא אֵילָנָא דְחַיִּי וְאִדְע
 מְהֵימְנוּתָא לְכָל בְּנֵי עֲלֵמָא

“Come and see, when Adam sinned, he sinned with the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, inflicting death upon all the inhabitants of the world. When Abraham appeared, he mended the world with another tree of Life, proclaiming faith to all the inhabitants of the world.”

Since Adam sinned with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and Abraham mended that by making it good as in:

following passage (Dan. 11:45) Vayita, he will pitch the tents of his palace between seas and glorious holy mountains. (Gen. 12:33) And called there on the name of the Lord.

Said Resh Lakish: "Do not read Vayikra and he called it, but Vayakri (Ib. b) and he caused it to be called." Infer from this that Abraham caused every traveler to call the name of the Holy One, praised be He ! How was this done ? After they had eaten and drunk they would stand up to bless Abraham, whereupon Abraham would say to them: "Have you then eaten from mine? You have eaten from that which belongs to the God of the Universe; therefore, praise and bless Him who spoke, and the world came in existence."

Eishel in Strong's H0815 is always equivalent to *ἀρουραν* in Septuagint, Genesis 21:33; 1 Samuel 22:6 and 31:13. > The sentence “στάχυσιν τῶν ἀλλοφύλων in Judge 15:5 is equivalent to “...ἀρούρας τῶν Παλαιστίνων...” in Flavius Josepho *Antiquitates Judaicae* 5.295, see also 6:14, and Apion 1:86 and 1:195. > Of Strong's. In the book *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, the word στάχυσιν means “grains in final development”, with the respective Hebrew word Strong's H7054 – *qamah* קָמָה Def: “standing grain”, time of harvest of the grains, to stand up, Wheat field. Gen 37:7; Exo 22:6; Det 16:9; Det 23:25; Jos 2:11; Jdg 15:5, 1Sa 4:15, 2 sa 14:7, 2Ki 19:26, Isa 17:5, Isa 37:27, Jer 51:29; Hos 8:7; Mic 7:6.

In the Targums of Onkelos, Gen 14:3, Gen 14:10 and Gen 21:33, the word פּרדיסא means a garden, an orchard a paradise. A Glossary of Targum Onkelos. According to Alexander Sperber's Edition. Brill publishing house

טו סור מרע, נעשה-
טוב; בקש שלום
ורדפהו.

15 *Depart from evil, and do
good; seek peace, and
pursue it.*

*Meaning remove the evil from the evil within and נעשה-
טוב transform it to the good,*

*For an example if a sinful thought arise he knew that its
origin was the aspect of kindness (archetype) that had
fallen with nobody to rescue or uplift it. So, he arose
like a lion to perform kindness to the Schechina
(kivyachol), with righteousness and good deeds, and
other matters.*

*This is the meaning of “who is a Chasid? One who
performs kindness to his creator “And the same with the
other (archetypes) sefirot as is known to my grandfather
of blessed memory (BESHT).*

*Now by Adam it states “lest he cast his hand eats from the
Tree of Life”*

*Since he sinned by the Tree of Knowledge he was not
permitted to touch the Tree of Life. However, Abraham who
mended the Tree of Knowledge merited the Tree of Life as
is written:*

א וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה, בְּאֵלֵי
מַמְרֵא; וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח-הָאֵהָל,
כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם.

1 And the LORD appeared
unto him by the terebinths
of Mamre, as he sat in the
tent door in the heat of the
day;

*The same tree that Adam sinned with. “Mamre” as
in: ומורה: rebellious,*

יח כִּי-יְהִי לְאִישׁ, בֶּן
סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרֵה--אִינּוֹ
שֹׁמֵעַ, בְּקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל
אִמּוֹ; וְיִסְרוּ אֹתוֹ, וְלֹא
יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם.

18 If a man has a stubborn and
rebellious son, that will not
hearken to the voice of his
father, or the voice of his mother,
and thou

So, Abraham mended “that” tree and there Elohim appeared to him..

And after he mended the Tree of Knowledge he merited the Tree of Life. As is written

אָפּל, לֵג וַיִּטֵּעַ 33 And Abraham planted a
בְּבֵאֵר שֶׁבַע; וַיִּקְרָא- tamarisk-tree in Beer-Sheba, and
שָׁם--בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, אֵל called there on the name of the
עוֹלָם. LORD, the Everlasting God.

Which is described by the Zohar that it is the Tree of Life.

And this is what is meant by the acronym for Eishel as representing eating, drinking and accompanying the guests (Aleph/shin/lamed..achilah, shesiya and levaya).

Each act uniting the Schechina with Hakadosh Baruch hu.

Abraham had the unique ability to untie the split worlds of Schechina with the divine which had been torn asunder by the sin of Adam and the Tree of Knowledge.


First he had to mend the mixing of good and evil by splitting the two. However he was not content with a (dualistic) world divided between good and evil. He then went a step further by reuniting them by taking the evil out of the evil, by seeing in all evil the notion of the fallen good. By reifying it back to its source above, and in doing so, he reunited the Schechina (the Not God) with the divine.

This according to the Degel is the very definition of the Tree of Life. Where life and divine vitality permeates all but needs the Tzaddik to repair and reunite the disparate and fragmented divine.

We come full circle to the Eshel/Tamarisk tree, a sacred orchard⁵

⁵ Regarding sacred groves see also: The only extant source for this ritual is a passage in the *Natural History* by Roman historian Pliny the Elder, written in the 1st century AD. Speaking of mistletoe, he writes:

“ We should not omit to mention the great admiration that the Gauls have for it as well. The druids – that is what they call their magicians – hold nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and a tree on which it is growing, provided it is a hard-timbered oak [*robur*]^{[4][5]}.... Mistletoe is rare and when found it is gathered with great ceremony, and ”



particularly on the sixth day of the moon.... Hailing the moon in a native word that means 'healing all things,' they prepare a ritual sacrifice and banquet beneath a tree and bring up two white bulls, whose horns are bound for the first time on this occasion. A priest arrayed in white vestments climbs the tree and, with a golden sickle, cuts down the mistletoe, which is caught in a white cloak. Then finally they kill the victims, praying to a god to render his gift propitious to those on whom he has bestowed it. They believe that mistletoe given in drink will impart fertility to any animal that is barren and that it is an antidote to all poisons.

While Pliny does not indicate the source on which he based this account, French archaeologist Jean-Louis Brunaux (fr) has argued for Posidonius of Rhodes, a polymath who flourished in the 1st century BC.