

Va'eira - And I Appeared to the Patriarchs
[From Rashi and Noam Elimelech]
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

Parshas Va'eira opens with Hashem Telling Moshe Rabbeinu about that he appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. The Avos accepted the promises regarding the gift of Eretz Yisroel and the redemption of the descendants. Moreover they did this without any question.

Rashi has a strange comment on verse 24:3 The Torah states, 'and I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov'. So the subject of whom Hashem appeared to is quite clear. Yet why does Rashi state here that the phrase 'and I appeared' refers to the Avos if the names of the Avos are in the text itself?

The Noam Elimelech writes the following. Each one of the Avos personified one of three traits, as is well known. Avraham personified *chesed*, kindness, Yitzchak Personified *gevurah*, strength, and Yaakov personified *tiferes*, glory as manifested in the Torah which balances strength and kindness properly. While the Avos differed between themselves as to how they related to Hashem, Hashem never changes so he appeared to each one of the Avos on his level But Hashem himself remained the same.

Despite the differences between the Avos, they were united in their belief that Hashem's promise will be fulfilled even if the time is a long way off. Therefore Hashem appeared to them with the name *Shakai*. Over here, the name *Shakai*, according to Rashi, refers to the fact that Hashem promised but did not yet fulfill. The name Hashem refers to the fulfillment aspect of these promises. Generally, the Name *Shakai* refers to the limitations that were imposed when Hashem created the world and said *dai*, enough. The Noam Elimelech adds that Hashem only used the name *Shakai* when making the promises to prevent the *klipos*, external forces from taking hold in Eretz Yisroel and in the descendents of the Avos. As long as the promises were unfulfilled, the conditions could be changed. But if Hashem appeared to the Avos with the name Hashem, even if the descendent were not worthy, these forces would have taken a greater hold and the nations of the world would have had too great of a hold on Eretz Yisroel.