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## **Nachmanides' Interpretations Concerning Rachel's Tomb in the Development of His Commentary on the Torah**

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Nachmanides's Commentary on the Torah is one of the most important exegetical works on the Pentateuch. The commentary was written in its entirety while Nachmanides lived in Spain, and he took a copy of it along with him when he moved to the Land of Israel, where he spent the final three years of his life (1267–1270). During that brief period he amended his commentary, introducing hundreds of addenda of various lengths. These numerous addenda and changes are gradually coming to light through a research project which has been conducted over the past few years. This article presents some of the fruits of this research, focusing on six fragments related to the location of Rachel's Tomb.

Nachmanides updated his Commentary on the Torah in light of three geographical discoveries which he made in relation to Rachel's Tomb: Rachel died inside the Land and not outside of it (fragments f. and d.); Rachel was not buried at Ramah (fragments b., c., d., e.); and Rachel's Tomb is close to Bethlehem (fragment a.). These facts affect various sections of the commentary, and Nachmanides rewrote these to reflect his new discoveries. These changes, like many other

amendments which he introduced, indicate Nachmanides's sensitivity and his constant willingness to reexamine his interpretations, to amend and to update them in accordance with new data and sources previously unknown to him.

Nachmanides was aware of the difficulties likely to arise from amending the text of his commentary which had already been copied and widely distributed. He therefore tried wherever possible to avoid changing or deleting sections, preferring instead to add new, complementary fragments. In general, this approach proved effective: the addenda were disseminated and in later generations were incorporated in the printed editions of the commentary. However, the new data which Nachmanides discovered concerning Rachel's Tomb made it impossible to avoid introducing certain changes into his commentary and deleting some passages. A comprehensive examination of the manuscripts and the printed editions reveals that not all of these have been preserved in the common editions of his commentary.