

Baba Metzia 87a

עד אברהם לא היה זקנה מאן דהוה בעי למשתעי בהדי אברהם משתעי בהדי יצחק
בהדי יצחק משתעי בהדי אברהם אתא אברהם בעא רחמי והוה זקנה שנאמר
(בראשית כד, א) ואברהם זקן בא בימים

The Gemara continues discussing Abraham: **Until Abraham, there was no aging**, i.e., old age was not physically recognizable. Consequently, **one who wanted to speak to Abraham** would mistakenly **speak to Isaac**, and vice versa: An individual who wanted to speak **to Isaac** would **speak to Abraham**, as they were indistinguishable. **Abraham came and prayed for mercy, and aging was** at last noticeable, **as it is stated: “And Abraham was old, well stricken in age”** (Genesis 24:1), which is the first time that aging is mentioned in the Bible.

עד יעקב לא הוה חולשא אתא יעקב בעא רחמי והוה חולשא שנאמר (בראשית
מח, א) ויאמר ליוסף הנה אביך חולה עד דאתא אלישע לא הוה דחליש ואתפח
אתא אלישע בעא רחמי ואתפח שנאמר (מלכים ב יג, יד) ואלישע חלה את חליו
אשר ימות בו מכלל דחלה חלי אחריתי

Until Jacob, there was no illness leading up to death; rather, one would die suddenly. **Jacob came and prayed for mercy, and illness was** brought to the world, allowing one to prepare for his death, **as it is stated: “And one said to Joseph: Behold, your father is sick”** (Genesis 48:1), which is the first time that sickness preceding death is mentioned in the Bible. **Until Elisha, one did not fall ill and then heal**, as everyone who fell ill would die. **Elisha came and prayed for mercy and he was healed, as it is written: “Now Elisha fell ill with his illness from which he was to die”** (II Kings 13:14). **By inference**, one can derive that **he** had previously **fallen ill** with **other illnesses** from which he did not die.