

לך לך

Lech-Lecha

Genesis 12:1-17:27
Haftarah Isaiah 40:27-41:16
Shabbat, October 24, 2026
י"ג בְּ חֶשְׁוָן תשפ"ז

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This week's parashah follows Avram as he answers the call of Lech Lecha (Go forth), leaving home for an unknown land on faith alone. We trace his descent to Egypt and return, his generous parting from Lot, the covenant renewed at Hebron, the rescue of Lot and meeting with Malki-Tzedek, and the great promises of offspring and land sealed in the Brit Bein HaBetarim (Covenant Between the Pieces) and in brit milah (the covenant of circumcision). The haftarah adds Yeshayahu's comfort to a weary Israel, assuring that the tireless Creator strengthens those who trust in Him.

The midrash finds in Avram the model of a seeker who recognized a Master behind the world's order before G-d ever spoke to him, and teaches that his greatness, like hidden fragrance, could only be revealed through movement. Our classical commentators debate how literally Avram's journeys foreshadow Jewish history, whether his trials were sin or test, and whether his call came in Ur or in Haran, while agreeing on how hard it is to leave home, birthplace, and family behind.

The chassidic voices read Lech Lecha inwardly, as a call to every soul to move past the obstacles of nature and circumstance toward its true source, serving G-d without thought of reward. Modern commentary closes by asking whether Avraham broke from his father or completed his path, and by picturing his descendants as a nation whose greatness would not be rare, but plentiful as the stars.



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THE READING · GENESIS 12:1–13

ראשון

First Aliyah

Avram's unconditional response to the Divine call to leave his homeland for an unknown destination establishes him as the founding model of faith and obedience, trusting in God's promise of blessing, land, and nationhood despite having no visible guarantee. Facing famine immediately upon arrival, he descends to Egypt, showing that even the chosen path of the Avot (Patriarchs) involves trials and practical caution, as seen in his request that Sarai present herself as his sister. AI SUMMARY

[1] The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֶךְ־לְךָ מֵאַרְצְךָ
וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
אַרְאֶךָּ׃

BERESHIT RABBAH 39:1 P. 38 How Avraham first discovered there is a G-d

BERESHIT RABBAH 39:2 P. 38 Why did Abraham need to leave home to become great?

RAMBAN & IBN EZRA P. 45 Why leaving home was the hardest part of the test

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[1] **The Lord said to Abram: Go you from your land,** the geographic location where you were born; **and from your birthplace,** the place for which you harbor a sense of closeness and belonging; **and from your father's house,** and travel **to the land,** currently unknown to you, **that I will show you.** You will be told only the general direction you must travel, and you will be informed when you reach your destination.

SELECTED RASHI

12:1 GET THEE OUT (literally, go for thyself) — for your own benefit, for your own good: there I will make of you a great nation whilst here you will not merit the privilege of having children (Rosh Hashanah 16b). Furthermore, I shall make known your character throughout the world (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 3)

[2] I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you; I will make your name great, And you shall be a blessing.

ב וְאֶעֶשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וַאֲבָרֶכְךָ וַאֲגַדְּלָה שְׁמֶךָ וֶהְיֵה בְּרָכָה:

[3] I will bless those who bless you And curse him that curses you; And all the families of the earth Shall bless themselves by you."

ג וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרֲכֶיךָ וּמְקַלֶּלְךָ אָאֹר וְנִבְרְכוּ בְךָ כֹּל מִשְׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה:

[4] Abram went forth as the LORD had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

ד וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מֵחָרָן:

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[2] You embark on this journey as an individual who is merely the head of a family or tribe. Nevertheless, I assure you that in the place where you are going **I will make you** into **a great nation and I will bless you and I will make your name great** as you will be renowned, **and you shall be a blessing,** meaning that people will use you as a paradigm for blessings. When they bless one another, they will say: May you merit to be like Abram. [3] **I will bless those who bless you, and he who curses you I will curse; and all the families of the earth,** not only the families of your descendants or your neighbors, **shall be blessed in,** or through, **you.** From this point forward, Abram would not live his life for himself alone as a private individual; he would become a symbol and a model for all. [4] **Abram went, as the Lord had spoken to him.** He set out on his way and left most of his family, who had also initially planned to go to Canaan, behind in Haran. **And Lot,** the son of his brother Haran, **went with him. Abram was five years and seventy years old upon his departure from Haran.**

SELECTED RASHI

12:2 AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION —Since travelling is the cause of three things—it decreases (breaks up) family life, it reduces one's wealth and lessens one's renown, he therefore needed these three blessings: that God should promise him children, wealth and a great name (Genesis Rabbah 39:11).

12:2 AND I WILL BLESS THEE —with wealth (Genesis Rabbah 39:11).

12:2 AND BE THOU A BLESSING — Blessings are entrusted to you; hitherto they were in My power — I blessed Adam and Noah — but from now on you shall bless whomsoever you wish (Genesis Rabbah 39:11) Another explanation is: AND I WILL MAKE THEE A GREAT NATION, this alludes to the fact that we say in our prayer "God of Abraham"; AND I WILL BLESS THEE — that we say, "God of Isaac"; AND I WILL MAKE THY NAME GREAT — that we say, "God of Jacob". One might think that we should conclude the benediction in which these invocations are recited by mentioning again the names of all the patriarchs — the text therefore states "Be thou a blessing" meaning, with you (i.e. with your name only) shall they conclude the benediction and not with them (their names) (Pesachim 117b).

12:2 FROM THY LAND — But had he not already departed from there together with his father and had reached as far as Haran (Genesis 11:31)? But thus God in effect said to him: Go still further away — leave now thy father's house also.

12:2 WHICH I WILL SHOW THEE — He did not reveal to him at once which land it was in order that he should hold it in high esteem and in order to reward him for complying with each and every command. Similar is, (Genesis 22:2) "Take thy son — thine only son — whom thou lovest — even Isaac"; similar is (Genesis 22:2) "upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of"; similar is, (Jonah 3:2) "And make unto it the proclamation that I shall tell thee of" (Genesis Rabbah 39:9).

12:3 AND IN THEE SHALL BE BLESSED — There are many Agadoth concerning this but the plain sense of the text is as follows: A man says to his son, "Mayest thou become as Abraham". This, too, is the meaning wherever the phrase ונברכו בך "And in thee shall be blessed" occurs in Scripture, and the following example proves this: (Genesis 48:20) בך יברך "By thee shall Israel bless their children saying, "May God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh".

ה וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט
בֶּן־אָחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכָשׁוּ
וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת
אַרְצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אַרְצָה כְּנָעַן׃

5 Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan,

ו וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בָּאָרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֶם עַד אֵלוֹן
מוֹרֶה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בָּאָרֶץ׃

6 Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

RAMBAN & IBN EZRA P. 43 Why the Torah dwells on small details of the patriarchs' travels

ז וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתֵּן
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה
הַנִּרְאֶה אֵלָיו׃

7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will assign this land to your offspring." And he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

ח וַיַּעְתֵּק מִשָּׁם הָהָרָה מִקֶּדֶם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט
אָהֳלָה בֵּית־אֵל מִיָּם וְהָעַי מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם
מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃

8 From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and he built there an altar to the LORD and invoked the LORD by name.

ט וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם הָלוֹךְ וְנָסוֹעַ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃

9 Then Abram journeyed by stages toward the Negeb.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

5 **Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot, son of his brother, and all their property that they had acquired, and the people that they had acquired in Haran; they departed to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to the land of Canaan.** The Torah does not specify the route they took, but it can be assumed that they either traveled through Syria and then along the coast of the Mediterranean, or along the international road that traversed present-day Iraq and Syria to Damascus, and then turned south across the Golan Heights until they crossed over the Jordan River into the land of Canaan via one of several possible crossing points. 6 **Abram passed through the land to the place of Shekhem,** the site where the city of Shekhem would later be built, **until the plain [elon] of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.** This observation, which is important for the continuation of the story, explains that the land to which Abram came was not desolate and empty of inhabitants, as were many regions at the time. Rather, it had been inhabited for many years by the Canaanite people. 7 **The Lord appeared to Abram** upon his arrival in Canaan, **and said: To your descendants I will give this land.** Earlier, when Abram was commanded to travel, he had been given a general blessing. At this point, God promised him a specific gift, that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. **He built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.** Abram built the first altar to God after His revelation to him. The altar was to serve as a reminder that God had revealed Himself to Abram in this place. 8 **He,** Abram, then **moved from there to the mountains, east of** the city of **Beit El, and he pitched his tent** there. **Beit El** was **to the west** of his place of encampment, **and Ai to the east.** For many years, Abram and his family were primarily nomadic shepherds who lived in tents. It can be assumed that much of the land was uninhabited at the time, leaving large empty areas suitable for grazing. Abram found pasture for his flock between Beit El and Ai. **He** also **built there an altar to the Lord, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.** 9 **Abram journeyed, steadily journeying to the Negev.** Since he had not been told where to stop, and as he had not yet found a place where he felt sufficiently comfortable, he left Beit El and continued southward.

SELECTED RASHI

12:5 [THE SOULS] THAT THEY HAD GOTTEN (literally, made) IN HARAN — The souls which he had brought beneath the sheltering wings of the Shechinah. Abraham converted the men and Sarah converted the women and Scripture accounts it unto them as if they had made them (Genesis Rabbah 39:14). However, the real sense of the text is that it refers to the men-servants and to the maidservants whom they had acquired for themselves. The word "עשה" is used here as (in Genesis 31:1), "he has acquired (עשה) all this wealth", and (Numbers 24:8), "And Israel acquires (עושה) wealth" — an expression for acquiring and amassing.

10 There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

י וַיְהִ֥י רָעָ֖ב בָּאָ֑רֶץ וַיֵּ֤רֶד אַבְרָם֙ מִצְרַ֣יְמָה לָג ר שָׁ֔ם כִּֽי־כָבֵ֥ד הָרָעָ֖ב בָּאָֽרֶץ׃

RAMBAN & RADAK P. 41 Avram's trip to Egypt foretold his descendants' future exile

11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are.

יא וַיְהִ֕י כַּאֲשֶׁ֥ר הִקְרִ֖יב לָב֣וֹא מִצְרָ֑יְמָה וַיֹּ֙אמֶר֙ אֶל־שָׂרַ֣י אִשְׁתּ֔וֹ הִנֵּה־נָ֥א יָדַ֖עְתִּי כִּ֣י אִשָּׁ֥ה יְפַֽת־מַרְאֶ֖ה אָֽתְּ׃

12 If the Egyptians see you, and think, 'She is his wife,' they will kill me and let you live.

יב וְהָיָ֗ה כִּֽי־יִרְא֤וּ אֹתָךְ֙ הַמִּצְרִ֔ים וְאָמְר֖וּ אִשְׁתּ֣וֹ זֹ֑את וְהָרְג֥וּ אֹתִ֖י וְאֹתָ֥ךְ יְחַיּֽוּ׃

13 Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you."

יג אִמְרִי־נָ֣א אֲחֹ֣תִי אָ֔תְּ לְמַ֥עַן֙ יִיטַב־לִ֣י בַעֲבוּרֵ֔ךְ וְחָיְתָ֥ה נַפְשִׁ֖י בִּגְלָלֵֽךְ׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

10 **There was famine in the land,** due to lack of rainfall, which had a negative impact upon both the produce required for human sustenance and the vegetation used for animal pasture. **And** therefore, **Abram descended to Egypt to reside there** temporarily, but not to remain there as a permanent resident; **as the famine was severe in the land.** Egypt, which is dependent upon the Nile rather than on rainfall, was generally immune from the effects of a famine of this kind. 11 **It was when he,** his camp, **drew near to come to Egypt,** that **he said to Sarai his wife: Behold, I know** and have become fully aware **now that you are a beautiful woman,** and that in addition to your external beauty you also have a strong personality and presence. 12 **It will be, when** you come with me to Egypt and **the Egyptians see you, they will say: This is his wife. And** then **they will kill me** out of desire for you, **and keep you alive.** Abram was concerned that he would be attacked, both due to Sarai's beauty and charming personality, and because of his great wealth. 13 **Please say** to the residents of Egypt that **you are my sister; so that it may be well with me for your sake;** as your brother, no one will have cause to harm me. **And my soul shall live because of you.**

SELECTED RASHI

12:10 A FAMINE IN THE LAND — in that land only to test him whether he would take exception to God's commands in that He had bidden him to go to the land of Canaan and now forced him to leave it (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 26).

12:11 BEHOLD NOW I KNOW — The Midrashic explanation is: Until now he had not perceived her beauty owing to the extreme modesty of both of them; now, however, through this event, he became cognisant of it (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 5). Another explanation: Usually, because of the exertion of travelling a person becomes uncomely, but she had retained her beauty (Genesis Rabbah 40:4). Still, the real sense of the text is this: Behold, now the time has come when I am anxious because of thy beauty. I have long known that thou art fair of appearance: but now we are travelling among black and repulsive people, brethren of the Ethiopians (Kushim), who have never been accustomed to see a beautiful woman. A similar example is, (Genesis 19:2) "Behold, now, my lords, turn aside I pray you.").

12:13 THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH ME FOR THY SAKE — they may give me presents.



THE READING · GENESIS 12:14–13:4

שני

Second Aliyah

Sarai's beauty leads to her being taken into Pharaoh's palace, but Hashem (the Divine Name) afflicts Pharaoh's household with plagues, compelling him to release her and send Abram away unharmed and enriched. Abram returns to Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) to the very place of his earlier altar between Bethel and Ai, where he again calls out in the name of Hashem, showing that divine providence protects the Avot (Patriarchs) even in exile and draws them back to the sacred sites of their original devotion. AI SUMMARY

14 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was.

יד וַיְהִ֗י כְּבוֹא֙ אַבְרָ֣ם מִצְרַ֔יְמָה וַיִּרְא֥וּ הַמִּצְרִ֖ים
אֶת־הָאִשָּׁ֑ה כִּֽי־יָפָ֥ה הִ֖וא מְאֹֽד׃

15 Pharaoh's courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace.

טו וַיִּרְא֣וּ אֹתָ֔הּ שָׂרֵ֖י פַּרְעֹ֑ה וַיְהַלְל֥וּ אֹתָ֖הּ
אֶל־פַּרְעֹ֛ה וַתֻּקַּ֥ח הָאִשָּׁ֖ה בֵּ֥ית פַּרְעֹֽה׃

16 And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels.

טז וּלְאַבְרָ֖ם הֵיטִ֣יב בַּעֲבוּרָ֑הּ וַיְהִי־לוֹ֙ צֹ֣אן־וּבָקָ֔ר
וַחֲמֹרִ֖ים וַעֲבָדִ֣ים וּשְׁפָחֹ֑ת וַאֲתֹנֹ֖ת וּגְמַלִּֽים׃

17 But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram.

יז וַיְנַגַּ֤ע יְהוָה֙ | אֶת־פַּרְעֹ֔ה נְגָעִ֥ים גְּדֹלִ֖ים
וְאֶת־בֵּיתֹ֑ו עַל־דְּבַ֥ר שָׂרַ֖י אֵ֥שֶׁת אַבְרָֽם׃

18 Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me! Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

יח וַיִּקְרָ֤א פַרְעֹה֙ לְאַבְרָ֔ם וַיֹּ֖אמֶר מַה־זֹּ֣את
עָשִׂ֣יתָ לִּ֑י לָמָ֣ה לֹא־הִגַּ֥דְתָּ לִּ֛י כִּ֥י אִשְׁתְּךָ֖ הִֽוא׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

14 Indeed, Abram's concern was justified, as **it was upon Abram's arrival in Egypt, the Egyptians saw the woman that she was very fair.** 15 **Pharaoh's officers saw her,** and **they praised her to Pharaoh** king of Egypt, informing him that there was an exceptionally beautiful woman among the visitors who had arrived from distant lands. **And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house** to be one of his wives. It seems that Sarai was not able to object, as she and Abram claimed to be siblings. 16 **And he,** Pharaoh, **benefited Abram for her sake,** as the brother of the woman he sought for himself. **He,** Abram, **acquired,** of his own property as well as from all the gifts he received, **sheep, oxen, donkeys, slaves, maidservants, female donkeys, and camels.** 17 But in the meantime, **the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his household,** his family and those surrounding him, **with great afflictions over the matter of Sarai, Abram's wife.** 18 **Pharaoh called Abram, and he said: What is this that you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?**

SELECTED RASHI

12:17 AND THE LORD PLAGUED PHARAOH etc. — He was smitten with the disease of Raathon which demands close continence (Genesis Rabbah 41:2).

12:17 BECAUSE OF SARAI (literally, by the word of Sarai) — at her orders: she said to the angel "Smite" and he smote (Midrash Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 5).

יט לָמָּה אָמַרְתְּ אֲחֹתִי הִוא וָאֶקַּח אֹתָהּ לִי
לְאִשָּׁה וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח וָלֵךְ׃

[19] Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and begone!"

כ וַיְצַו עָלָיו פַּרְעֹה אֲנָשִׁים וַיְשַׁלְּחוּ אֹתוֹ
וְאֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ׃

[20] And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.

א וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃

[1] From Egypt, Abram went up into the Negeb, with his wife and all that he possessed, together with Lot.

ב וְאַבְרָם כָּבֵד מְאֹד בַּמִּקְנֶה בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב׃

[2] Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold.

ג וַיֵּלֶךְ לְמַסָּעָיו מִנֶּגֶב וְעַד־בֵּית־אֵל עַד־הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה שָׁם אָהֳלֹה בַּתְּחִלָּה בֵּין בֵּית־אֵל
וּבֵין הָעָי׃

[3] And he proceeded by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been formerly, between Bethel and Ai,

ד אֶל־מְקוֹם הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שָׁם בָּרִאשֹׁנָה
וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃

[4] the site of the altar that he had built there at first; and there Abram invoked the LORD by name.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[19] **Why did you say: She is my sister? I took her for myself as my wife.** Since you claimed to be her brother, I intended to take her as my wife. I acted properly; I did not rape her or take her by force. On the contrary, I treated her with full respect and wished to marry her. It is only now that I have become aware that I took your wife from you. **And** therefore **now, here is your wife.** She is too great a temptation for the men who live here. We want neither her nor the troubles and plagues she has brought upon us, so **take her and go.**

[20] **Pharaoh commanded men regarding him** to accompany Abram. The escort was provided not merely as a mark of honor; their mission was to compel Abram to leave their place. **And** so **they sent forth him, and his wife, and everything that was his.** [1] **Abram ascended** northward **from Egypt, he, and his wife, and everything that was his, and Lot with him, to the Negev.** [2] **And Abram was very wealthy in livestock, in silver, and in gold.** Abram was successful in his business dealings and became very wealthy over time. The significance of this detail will become apparent as the narrative progresses. [3] **He went on his journeys from the Negev to Beit El, to the place where his tent had been initially, between Beit El and Ai.** He retraced his steps along the same route he had previously taken, in order to reacquaint himself with the inhabitants of those places, or to pay his debts, as explained by the Sages. [4] He came **to the place of the altar that he prepared there at first;** and again **Abram proclaimed there the name of the Lord.** Perhaps this means that he called a public assembly, prayed, and gave speeches, with the aim of making the name of God known in the world.



THE READING · GENESIS 13:5–18

שלישי

Third Aliyah

To avoid strife, Abram graciously lets Lot choose his territory first, and Lot selfishly picks the lush but morally corrupt plain of Sodom, separating from Abram who remains in Canaan. After the separation, Hashem (God) reaffirms His covenant with Abram, promising him and his offspring the entire land forever, and Abram settles in Hebron, building an altar there. AI SUMMARY

5 Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents,

ה וְגַם־לְלוֹט הַהֹלֵךְ אֶת־אַבְרָם הָיָה צֹאן־וּבָקָר וְאֹהָלִים:

6 so that the land could not support them staying together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together.

ו וְלֹא־נָשָׂא אֹתָם הָאָרֶץ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו:

7 And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle. —The Canaanites and Perizzites were then dwelling in the land.—

ז וַיְהִי־רִיב בֵּין רֹעֵי מִקְנֵה־אַבְרָם וּבֵין רֹעֵי מִקְנֵה־לוֹט וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אָז יֹשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ:

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

5 **Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks, and cattle, and tents.** Lot left Ur of the Chaldeans as the heir of his father, Haran. Consequently, he had property of his own. Although he traveled alongside his uncle Abram, he was not subservient to him. 6 **And the land could not support them to live together, as their property was substantial, and they were unable to live together.** Although at the time the land was relatively uninhabited with large areas available for pasture, the size of flocks that grazed near a settlement was generally in proportion with the size of the settlement. In this situation, when the tribe of nomads arrived with Abram's large flocks and Lot's large flocks in addition to those of the locals, there was not enough land available for all of them. However, in addition to these objective limitations, there was another significant factor preventing them from living together. 7 **There was** also **a quarrel between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. And** in this context, the verse notes that **the Canaanites and the Perizites then lived in the land.** Since Abram did not yet own the land, and other tribes lived there, the quarrel between his herdsmen and Lot's was potentially dangerous, as the local inhabitants could take advantage of their dispute and attack them.

SELECTED RASHI

13:7 AND THERE WAS A QUARREL because Lot's shepherds were wicked men and grazed their cattle in other people's fields. Abram's shepherds rebuked them for this act of robbery, but they replied, "The land has been given to Abram, and since he has no son as heir, Lot will be his heir: consequently this is not robbery". Scripture, however, states: "The Canaanite and the Perizzite abode then in the land", so that Abram was not yet entitled to possession (Genesis Rabbah 41:5).

ח וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־לוֹט אַל־נָא תְהִי מְרִיבָה
בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וּבֵין רֹעַי וּבֵין רֹעֶיךָ כִּי־אֲנָשִׁים
אַחִים אֲנָחְנוּ׃

8 Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, between my herdsmen and yours, for we are kinsmen.

ט הֲלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ הִפָּרֶד נָא מֵעָלָי
אִם־הַשְּׂמֹאל וְאֵימְנָה וְאִם־הַיָּמִין וְאַשְׂמְאִילָה׃

9 Is not the whole land before you? Let us separate: if you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north."

י וַיִּשָּׂא־לוֹט אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת־כָּל־כִּכַּר
הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כֻלָּהּ מַשְׁקֶה לִפְנֵי | שַׁחֵת יְהוָה
אֶת־סְדֹם וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה כְּגַן־יְהוָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
בֹּאֲכָה צֹעַר׃

10 Lot looked about him and saw how well watered was the whole plain of the Jordan, all of it—this was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—all the way to Zoar, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt.

יא וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ לוֹט אֶת כָּל־כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע
לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּפָּרְדוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו׃

11 So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they parted from each other;

יב אַבְרָם יָשַׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־כְּנָעַן וְלוֹט יָשַׁב בְּעָרֵי
הַכִּכָּר וַיֶּאֱהַל עַד־סְדֹם׃

12 Abram remained in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the Plain, pitching his tents near Sodom.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

8 Abram said to Lot: Please, let there be no quarrel between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. When herdsmen disagree with one another, each group complains to their master, which could eventually lead to a fight between the heads of the two groups, Abram and Lot. Abram did not wish to become embroiled in a conflict with his relative. **9 Isn't the whole land before you?** Since Abram and Lot were not looking to settle down, but were merely seeking pasture, the entire land was available to them, without restrictions. **Please, part from me,** and we will head in different directions; we do not need to dwell in the same place. So choose which territory you would like: **If** you go **to the left, I will go** to the **right; and if** you go **to the right, I will go left.** **10** At the time, Abram and Lot were situated in the southern Judean hills. **Lot raised his eyes, and** from that vantage point he **saw** the expansive view of the valley below, **the entire** area south of the Jordan River, known as the **plain of the Jordan,** and saw **that it was all watered.** This plain was a large, very low area, extremely rich in water. Even nowadays there are fertile areas south of the Dead Sea, where the climate is almost tropical, but **before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah,** the climate in the region was different. At that time, the entire area of what is today called the Dead Sea was one large, well-watered vale. Because of the heat and water, it was **like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt,** an area rich in vegetation that does not receive its water from rain but from rivers and irrigation canals. This description applied to the entire plain **as,** until, **you come to** the small town of **Tzoar.** **11 Lot** accepted Abram's suggestion and **chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan,** a lush, fertile area large enough for his flocks and herds. **Lot journeyed from the east** of the place where he and Abram were situated, the side that faced the Dead Sea. **And they parted one from another,** each following a different path. **12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived in,** among, and between, **the cities of the plain** of Jordan, **and** Lot **pitched his tent as far as Sodom.** At this stage Lot was not yet a resident of Sodom, but a tent-dwelling shepherd who lived near the city and under its patronage.

SELECTED RASHI

13:9 IF THOU WILT TAKE THE LEFT HAND, THAN I WILL GO TO THE RIGHT —Wherever you settle down I will not go far from you and I will stand by you as a shield and as a helper. Ultimately, indeed, he (Lot) was really in need of him, as it is said, (Genesis 14:14) "And Abram heard that his brother was taken captive etc."

13:11 FROM THE EAST — He removed from Abram and went westward of Abram — consequently he travelled from the East to the West. A Midrashic explanation is: He wandered away from the Originator (מקדמונו) of the Universe, saying, "I want neither Abram nor his God" (Genesis Rabbah 41:7).

יג וְאַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מְאֹד׃

13 Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against the LORD.

יד וַיהוָה אָמַר אֶל־אַבְרָם אַחֲרֵי הִפָּרֶד־לוֹט מֵעִמּוֹ שָׂא נָא עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה שָׁם צָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה וָקֵדְמָה וָיָמָּה׃

14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had parted from him, "Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west,

טו כִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה רֹאֶה לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה וּלְזַרְעֲךָ עַד־עוֹלָם׃

15 for I give all the land that you see to you and your offspring forever.

טז וְשַׂמְתִּי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר | אִם־יוּכַל אִישׁ לִמְנוֹת אֶת־עֲפַר הָאָרֶץ גַּם־זַרְעֲךָ יִמָּנֶה׃

16 I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring too can be counted.

יז קוּם הִתְהַלֵּךְ בָּאָרֶץ לְאָרְכָּהּ וּלְרָחְבָּהּ כִּי לְךָ אֶתְּנֶנָּה׃

17 Up, walk about the land, through its length and its breadth, for I give it to you."

יח וַיֶּאֱהַל אַבְרָם וַיָּבֹא וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא אֲשֶׁר בְּחֶבְרוֹן וַיִּבֶן־שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה׃

18 And Abram moved his tent, and came to dwell at the terebinths of Mamre, which are in Hebron; and he built an altar there to the LORD.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

13 At this point, the text notes the moral qualities of the inhabitants of Sodom, among whom Lot had chosen to live: **And** even at that time **the men of Sodom were** known to be **extremely wicked and sinful to the Lord.** 14 **The Lord said to Abram, after Lot parted from him: Raise now your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward, southward, eastward, and westward;** 15 **for all the land that you see, I will give to you, and to your descendants forever.** 16 **I will render your descendants** numerous **like the dust of the earth;** so that only **if a man could count the dust of the earth, so your descendants shall be counted.** 17 So therefore, **arise, walk in the land to its length and to its breadth, as to you I will give it.** Even though the land is currently inhabited by others and is not yet in your possession, you can feel as comfortable in it as a landowner strolling through his estate. 18 **Abram** did not remain between Beit El and Ai, but he also did not continue wandering. Rather, he turned southward and decided to encamp. He **pitched his tent, and came and settled in the plains [elonei] of Mamre, which are in Hebron. And he built there an altar to the Lord.** While on the move seeking pasture for his flock, Abram spread his faith by constructing altars and publicizing the name of God.

SELECTED RASHI

13:13 BUT THE MEN OF SODOM WERE WICKED, and yet Lot did not refrain from living with them. Our Rabbis learned from here how the text (Proverbs 10:11) "and the name of the wicked shall rot" should be applied (Yoma 38b).



THE READING · GENESIS 14:1–20

רביעי

Fourth Aliyah

Avraham's decisive rescue of Lot from the four invading kings demonstrates his courage, loyalty to kin, and reliance on God rather than on the spoils of war, as shown by his refusal to take any of Sodom's wealth for himself. His encounter with Malki-Tzedek, king of Shalem and priest of God Most High, who blesses him and receives a tenth of the spoils, highlights Avraham's recognition of God as the ultimate source of victory and blessing. AI SUMMARY

[1] Now, when King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim

א וַיְהִי֙ בִּימֵ֣י אַמְרָפֶ֔ל מֶ֖לֶךְ־שִׁנְעָ֑ר אַרְיוֹךְ֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ אֶלָּסָ֔ר כְּדָרְלָעֹ֖מֶר מֶ֣לֶךְ עֵילָ֑ם וְתִדְעָ֖ל מֶ֥לֶךְ גּוֹיִֽם׃

[2] made war on King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar,

ב עָשׂ֗וּ מִלְחָמָה֙ אֶת־בֶּ֣רַע מֶֽלֶךְ־סְדֹ֔ם וְאֶת־בִּרְשַׁ֖ע מֶ֣לֶךְ עֲמֹרָ֑ה שִׁנְאָ֖ב | מֶ֣לֶךְ אַדְמָ֑ה וְשֶׁמְאֶ֣בֶר֙ מֶ֣לֶךְ (צביים) [צְבוֹיִ֔ם] וּמֶ֖לֶךְ בֶּ֥לַע הִיא־צֹֽעַר׃

[3] all the latter joined forces at the Valley of Siddim, now the Dead Sea.

ג כָּל־אֵ֛לֶּה חָבְר֥וּ אֶל־עֵ֖מֶק הַשִּׂדִּ֑ים הִ֖וא יָ֥ם הַמֶּֽלַח׃

[4] Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

ד שְׁתֵּ֤ים עֶשְׂרֵה֙ שָׁנָ֔ה עָבְד֖וּ אֶת־כְּדָרְלָעֹ֑מֶר וּשְׁלֹ֥שׁ־עֶשְׂרֵ֖ה שָׁנָ֥ה מָרָֽדוּ׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[1] **It was in the days of Amrafel king of Shinar,** a large kingdom in the area of Babylonia; **Ariokh king of Elasar,** probably a region northeast of Babylonia; **Kedorlaomer king of Elam,** also northeast of Babylonia; **and Tidal king of Goyim.** It is possible that this title means that Tidal reigned over a conglomeration of different tribes or nations [goyim], a phenomenon known even in ancient times. [2] **They,** those kings, **waged war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Adma, and Shemever king of Tzevoyim, and the king of Bela, which is** the same city that was later called **Tzoar.** [3] **All these,** the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, Tzevoyim and Bela, **joined forces at the valley of Sidim,** one of the plural forms of sadeh, meaning field, **which is** in the place now known as **the Dead Sea.** [4] For **twelve years they served Kedorlaomer,** who is singled out probably because he was the strongest member of the coalition of northern kings. It can be assumed that these areas had been conquered by the kings of the north prior to Abram's arrival in Canaan. **And in the thirteenth year, they rebelled.** It appears that in addition to the kings of the five cities previously mentioned, the entire region revolted against these foreign rulers with their strange language and culture, who had come from afar with imperialist aspirations. Similarly, many years later, when Nebuchadnezzar took control of the Land of Israel, its various leaders came together and established alliances in order to strengthen one another against the foreign ruler and restore their independence.

ה וּבְאַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בָּא כְדָרְלָעֹמֶר
וְהַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיַּכּוּ אֶת־רְפָאִים
בְּעַשְׁתְּרֹת קַרְנַיִם וְאֶת־הַזּוּזִים בְּהָם וְאֵת
הָאֵימִים בְּשָׁוֵה קִרְיָתָיִם:

5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh-kiriathaim,

ו וְאֶת־הַחֹרִי בְּהַרְרָם שֵׂעִיר עַד אֵיל פָּארָן
אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּדְבָּר:

6 and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness.

ז וַיָּשֻׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־עֵין מִשְׁפָּט הִוא קָדֵשׁ וַיַּכּוּ
אֶת־כָּל־שְׂדֵה הָעֲמָלֵקִי וְגַם אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי הַיֹּשֵׁב
בְּחַצְצֹן תָּמָר:

7 On their way back they came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and subdued all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon-tamar.

ח וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם וּמֶלֶךְ עֲמֹרָה וּמֶלֶךְ אַדְמָה
וּמֶלֶךְ (צביים) [צְבוֹיִם] וּמֶלֶךְ בֶּלַע הִוא־צֹעַר
וַיַּעַרְכוּ אִתָּם מִלְחָמָה בְּעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים:

8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar, went forth and engaged them in battle in the Valley of Siddim:

ט אֶת כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם וְתִדְעָל מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם
וְאַמְרָפֶל מֶלֶךְ שִׁנְעָר וְאַרְיוֹךְ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּסָר
אַרְבָּעָה מְלָכִים אֶת־הַחֲמִשָּׁה:

9 King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against those five.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

5 And in the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came to suppress these rebellions, **and smote** the **Refaim,** remnants of the Anakim, **in Ashterot Karnayim,** northern modern-day Jordan, **and the Zuzim,** another name for Refaim **in** a place called **Ham, and the Eimim,** yet another name for Refaim **in Shaveh Kiryatayim.** Moving from place to place, the kings of the north waged battles against local rulers and defeated them one after the other. **6 And the Horites,** an important nation among the early settlers of Canaan, one of whose tribes lived **in their mountain Se'ir,** in the land of Edom. Later Esau and his family conquered the area from this tribe and intermingled with them. It seems that the army of the coalition of kings advanced from north to south along the eastern side of the Jordan River. They routed all the kings and tribes they encountered there, **until Eil Paran, which is adjacent to,** at the edge of, **the wilderness** of Sinai. **7 They** then **turned back, and came to En Mishpat, which is** also called **Kadesh.** After defeating all the rulers on the eastern side of the Jordan River, the kings turned northward again **and smote the entire field of the Amalekites,** a region in Edom. Although Amalek was not yet born, his descendants would later live there, and the place is described according to its future name. **And** they **also** smote **the Emorites, who lived in Hatzatzon Tamar,** another name for Ein Gedi. The kings of the north traveled from place to place, striking any nation or tribe that stood in their way. Their vast experience and military might undoubtedly gave them a substantial advantage over the local kings of small fiefdoms. **8 The king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Adma, the king of Tzevoyim, and the king of Bela, which is Tzoar, went out; and they waged a war with them,** the kings of the north, **in the valley of Sidim,** which was a flat area suitable for combat. **9** They fought **with Kedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goyim, and Amrafel king of Shinar, and Ariokh king of Elasar; four kings against the five.** Although the local kings outnumbered the foreign ones, the actual balance of power dramatically favored the kings of the north, who represented four powerful kingdoms against the rulers of five small cities. It should be noted, however, that as was customary among mighty kings at the time, the king himself did not participate in the battle. He simply sent a spearhead force to quash the rebellion.

10 Now the Valley of Siddim was dotted with bitumen pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, in their flight, threw themselves into them, while the rest escaped to the hill country.

וְעֵמֶק הַשִּׂדִּים בְּאֵרֹת בֶּאֱרֹת חֵמָר וַיָּנֻסוּ מַלְכֵי־סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה וַיִּפְּלוּ־שָׁמָּה וְהַנִּשְׁאָרִים הָרָה נָסוּ׃

11 [The invaders] seized all the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their provisions, and went their way.

יאוַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כָּל־רְכֻשׁ סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה וְאֶת־כָּל־אָכְלָם וַיֵּלֵכוּ׃

12 They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, and his possessions, and departed; for he had settled in Sodom.

יבוַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־לוֹט וְאֶת־רְכֻשׁוֹ בֶּן־אֲחִי אַבְרָם וַיֵּלֵכוּ וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב בִּסְדֹם׃

13 A fugitive brought the news to Abram the Hebrew, who was dwelling at the terebinths of Mamre the Amorite, kinsman of Eshkol and Aner, these being Abram's allies.

יגוַיָּבֹא הַפָּלִיט וַיַּגֶּד לְאַבְרָם הָעִבְרִי וְהוּא שֹׁכֵן בְּאֵלֹנֵי מַמְרֵא הָאֱמֹרִי אֲחִי אֶשְׁכֹּל וַאֲחִי עָנֵר וְהֵם בַּעֲלֵי בְרִית־אַבְרָם׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

10 **The valley of Sidim,** albeit fertile, **was full of clay pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell there,** into the pits; **and those who remained,** who had not fallen into the pits, **fled to the highlands.** 11 **They,** the four kings from the north, **took all the property of Sodom and Gomorrah,** Adma, Tzevoyim, and Tzoar. They passed through these cities without meeting any resistance and looted their property, **and all their food,** which they fed to their armies. **And they** then turned away and **went** northward back toward their place of origin. 12 **They took Lot,** who was the **son of Abram's brother, and his property and they went; and he lived in Sodom.** Since he had not long been associated with residents of these cities, Lot apparently did not want to get involved in the war. He did not even take an interest when the kings of Elam and Shinar fought the nearby king of Sodom. Nevertheless, the soldiers of Kedorlaomer and Amrafel did not care that Lot was a nomad who had also come from the north. As he was living in the place of the rebellion and he owned property, they captured him as well and plundered his possessions. 13 **The survivor,** an unidentified individual, had fled from the battlefield and escaped the war, as always happens during military conflicts. According to the Talmud, this refugee was Og king of Bashan. He **came and told Abram the Hebrew; and he was dwelling on the plains of Mamre the Emorite,** who was the **brother of Eshkol, and** the **brother of Aner, and they were allies of Abram.** Abram had developed close relationships with his neighbors, Mamre and his men, who ruled over Hebron or the nearby plains of Mamre. These relations included a mutual pact for protection. The support of his allies apparently strengthened Abram's resolve.

SELECTED RASHI

14:13 AND THERE CAME THE ONE WHO ESCAPED — According to the real meaning this was Og who had escaped from the battle with the Rephaim (see Genesis 5:5) and it is to this that the text refers (Deuteronomy 3:11) "For only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim", and this is what is meant by נשאר "left", for Amraphel and his allies did not kill him when they smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim. So is the statement in the Tanchuma 4:6:25 (Chukat). But according to the Midrash Genesis Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 42:8) it refers to Og in allusion to him as the only one of the generation of the Flood who escaped that catastrophe, and this is what is meant (Deuteronomy 3:11) "of the remnant of the Rephaim", for it is said. (Genesis 6:4) "The Nephilim (= Rephaim cf. Genesis Rabbah 26) were in the earth etc." His intention in telling Abraham that his nephew was captured was that Abraham should wage war against the kings and that he should be killed so that he, himself, might marry Sarah.

14:13 THE HEBREW — the one who came from the other side (עבר) of the River (Euphrates) (Genesis Rabbah 42:8).

14 When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he mustered his retainers, born into his household, numbering three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

יד וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אָחִיו וַיָּרֶק
אֶת־חֲנִיכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׁמֹנָה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ
מֵאוֹת וַיִּרְדֹּף עַד־דָּן:

15 At night, he and his servants deployed against them and defeated them; and he pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

טו וַיֵּחָלֵק עֲלֵיהֶם | לָיְלָה הוּא וַעֲבָדָיו וַיַּכֵּם
וַיִּרְדְּפֵם עַד־חוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר מִשְּׂמֹאל לְדַמָּשֶׂק:

16 He brought back all the possessions; he also brought back his kinsman Lot and his possessions, and the women and the rest of the people.

טז וַיָּשֶׁב אֶת כָּל־הָרְכֻשׁ וְגַם אֶת־לוֹט אָחִיו
וּרְכֻשׁוֹ הֵשִׁיב וְגַם אֶת־הַנָּשִׁים וְאֶת־הָעָם:

17 When he returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh, which is the Valley of the King.

יז וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם לִקְרָאתוֹ אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבוֹ
מֵהַכּוֹת אֶת־כְּדָרְלָעֹמֶר וְאֶת־הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר
אִתּוֹ אֶל־עֵמֶק שָׁוֵה הוּא עֵמֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ:

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

14 **Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive.** The war itself did not interest Abram; it was the capture of Lot that spurred him into action. **And he marshaled his retainers,** called upon them to leave their homes and join him. At least some of these men had been **born in his house** and grown up in his camp. The group of soldiers who answered his call amounted to a total of **three hundred and eighteen. And** Abram **pursued** the kings' camp, which had headed north after finishing their business in Sodom, **until Dan,** a region in northern Canaan also called by a later name reflecting the area's inhabitants centuries later. 15 On returning from their string of victories, during which they had vanquished the rebels, the kings encamped near Dan. This well-watered region was perfectly suited for a short stay. The kings were likely pleased by their successes and rested complacently. **He,** Abram, **arrayed** his men **against them at night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them until Hova.** The location of Hova is unknown. The only detail the verse provides is that it is a place **which is to the left,** north, **of Damascus.** 16 **He returned all the goods.** The looted property was there for the taking, as the soldiers who fled for their lives left it behind. **And also his brother Lot and his property he returned, and also the women and the people.** Plundered goods and captives were part of the victors' spoils in military campaigns of this type. The kings of the north took men for slaves, and women for all their needs. Abram released all these captives and returned to the Hebron region. 17 **The king of Sodom,** who was presumably disheveled and suffering from war wounds, **went out to meet him,** Abram, perhaps from one of the bitumen pits. The king of Sodom hoped to restore some of his losses through negotiations with Abram, who was now the rising power in the region, **after his return from smiting Kedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, to the valley of Shaveh, which is the valley of the king.**

SELECTED RASHI

14:14 HIS TRAINED SERVANTS — The word is written without a י (after the כ) so it may be read חניכו "his trained one", referring to Eliezer whom he had trained to the observance of religious duties. The word חנך signifies introducing a person or a thing, for the first time, to some particular occupation in which it is intended that he should remain (i. e. to dedicate or devote to some particular purpose). It has a similar sense in (Proverbs 22:6) "Train up (חנוך) a child", and in (Numbers 7:84) חנוכת המזבח "the dedication of the altar", and (Psalms 30:1) "The dedication (חנוכת) of the house" In old French enseigner; English: to teach, instruct.

14:14 THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN — Our Rabbis said, "It was Eliezer alone whom he armed and it (318) is the numerical value of his name" (Nedarim 32a).

14:14 AS FAR AS DAN — There his strength failed him for he saw prophetically that at some future time his descendants would there erect a calf (Sanhedrin 96a).

18 And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High.

יח וּמַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם הוֹצִיא לֶחֶם וְיָיִן
וְהוּא כֹהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן׃

19 He blessed him, saying, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

יט וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמַר בָּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן
קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ׃

20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your foes into your hand." And [Abram] gave him a tenth of everything.

כ וּבָרוּךְ אֵל עֶלְיוֹן אֲשֶׁר־מִגֵּן צָרֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ
וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ מַעֲשֵׂר מִכֹּל׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

18 **And Malkitzedek king of Shalem,** another name for Jerusalem, **brought out bread and wine,** a customary ritual performed as a festive greeting. In this manner Malkitzedek, who was from a different region than the king of Sodom, also sought to honor Abram as a great hero after his victory over the kings of the north. **And he,** Malkitzedek, **was** not only a king, but also **a priest of God, the Most High.** Although he lived among the local pagans, he was one of the few who worshipped the one God, referred to as El, the Most High. El is translated here as simply God. Thus Malkitzedek, who is identified by rabbinic tradition as Shem son of Noah was one of a small group of individuals who did not worship idols, and whose faith was close to that of Abram. 19 As a priest, **he,** Malkitzedek **blessed him.** It is possible that Abram did not wish to be blessed by the king of Sodom, but as Malkitzedek was a priest of God, Abram accepted his blessing. **And he said: Blessed is Abram to God, the Most High, master of heaven and earth,** 20 **and blessed is God, the Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.** Malkitzedek formally blessed both Abram for his character, which was blessed by God, and God for providing the victory. **He gave him a tenth of everything.** Abram treated the priest with respect and bestowed upon him a substantial gift, a tenth of all the property he had restored.

SELECTED RASHI

14:18 AND MELCHIZEDEK — A Midrashic explanation is that he is identical with Shem, son of Noah (Nedarim 32b).

14:18 BREAD AND WINE — Thus is done for those wearied through battle. He showed him (Abraham) that he bore him no malice for killing his descendants. The Midrashic explanation is that he (Melchizedek) thereby gave an intimation to him (Abraham) of the meal-offerings and libations which his descendants would offer there (in Salem which is Jeru-salem) (Genesis Rabbah 43:6).



THE READING · GENESIS 14:21–15:6

חמישי

Fifth Aliyah

Abram refuses any reward from the king of Sodom, insisting that his wealth come only from God and not from a mortal, so that none could claim credit for making him rich. When Abram voices his anguish over remaining childless, God promises him offspring as countless as the stars, and Abram's emunah (faith) in this promise is reckoned to him as righteousness. AI SUMMARY

כא וַיֹּ֤אמֶר מֶלֶךְ־סְדֹם֙ אֶל־אַבְרָ֔ם תֶּן־לִ֖י הַנֶּ֑פֶשׁ
וְהָרְכֻ֖שׁ קַח־לָֽךְ׃

21 Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the possessions for yourself.”

כב וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אַבְרָם֙ אֶל־מֶ֣לֶךְ סְדֹ֔ם הֲרִמֹ֥תִי יָדִ֖י
אֶל־יְהוָ֑ה אֵ֣ל עֶלְי֔וֹן קֹנֵ֖ה שָׁמַ֥יִם וָאָֽרֶץ׃

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth:

כג אִם־מִחוּט֙ וְעַד־שְׂרוֹךְ־נַ֔עַל וְאִם־אֶקַּ֖ח
מִכָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָ֑ךְ וְלֹ֤א תֹאמַר֙ אֲנִ֣י הֶעֱשַׁ֔רְתִּי
אֶת־אַבְרָֽם׃

23 I will not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap of what is yours; you shall not say, ‘It is I who made Abram rich.’

כד בִּלְעָדַ֗י רַ֚ק אֲשֶׁר֙ אָכְל֣וּ הַנְּעָרִ֔ים וְחֵ֥לֶק
הָאֲנָשִׁ֖ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר הָלְכ֣וּ אִתִּ֑י עָנֵ֤ר אֶשְׁכֹּל֙ וּמַמְרֵ֔א
הֵ֖ם יִקְח֥וּ חֶלְקָֽם׃

24 For me, nothing but what my servants have used up; as for the share of the men who went with me—Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre—let them take their share.”

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

21 After seeing Abram’s considerable generosity in his gift to Malkitzedek, **the king of Sodom said to Abram: Give me the people, and take the property for yourself.** Let me have the residents of my city, Sodom, as I am responsible for them, and we will waive any claim to the plunder. You can keep any property the kings looted from us, which you rescued from them. 22 **Abram said to the king of Sodom: I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, master of heaven and earth.** The raising of one’s hand or hands to the heavens is a gesture indicating an oath.

23 **Surely, be it** even **a thread** of a garment **or a shoelace, I will not take of anything that is yours,** so **that you will not say: I made Abram rich.** I do not want my wealth to be attributed to you and to the property of Sodom. Consequently, I shall return all the property to you 24 **without regard to me,** leave me out of the calculations, do not take me into account (see also 41:16). **Only that which the young men have** already **eaten** from the property we have restored, as they needed it for their sustenance on their way back from the north to Jerusalem; this property shall not be restored. **And** also **the portion of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre,** Abram’s friends and allies, who were probably not among his three hundred and eighteen soldiers. Since they joined with Abram and supported his cause, they deserved a portion of the spoils and Abram did not wish to deprive them of it. Therefore, he said: I insist that **they shall take their portion.** But as for me, although as the victorious commander I am rightfully entitled to the majority of the spoils, I relinquish my entire portion.

א אַחַר | הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם בְּמַחֲזֶה לֵאמֹר אַל־תִּירָא אַבְרָם אָנֹכִי מָגֵן לָךְ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד:

[1] Some time later, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. He said, "Fear not, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

BERESHIT RABBAH 44:1 ONLINE AT TORAHFORM.COM Why the mitzvot's details matter so much

ב וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֲדֹנָי יֱהוִה מַה־תִּתֶּן־לִי וְאָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ עֲרִירִי וּבֶן־מֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי הוּא דַּמֶּשֶׂק אֱלִיעֶזֶר:

[2] But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what can You give me, seeing that I shall die childless, and the one in charge of my household is Dammesek Eliezer!"

ג וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם הֵן לִי לֹא נָתַתָּה זָרַע וְהִנֵּה בֶן־בֵּיתִי יוֹרֵשׁ אֹתִי:

[3] Abram said further, "Since You have granted me no offspring, my steward will be my heir."

ד וְהִנֵּה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר לֹא יִירָשְׁךָ זֶה כִּי־אִם אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֵּעֶיךָ הוּא יִירָשֶׁךָ:

[4] The word of the LORD came to him in reply, "That one shall not be your heir; none but your very own issue shall be your heir."

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[1] **After these matters,** after Abram's war with the great kings of the north, he may have been concerned that the powerful rulers might return to Canaan for another military campaign in order to take revenge. And so **the word of the Lord came to Abram in a** prophetic **vision, saying: Fear not, Abram, I am a shield for you,** and I will protect you from all harm. Additionally, **your** future **reward** for your deeds **is very great.** [2] **Abram said: My Lord God, what will You give me? I go childless.** You have promised me an exceedingly great reward, but what can I do with it when I have no children? **And the steward of my house,** the one in charge of all my dealings since I have no son, **is Eliezer of,** who comes from,23 **Damascus.** [3] **Abram said: Behold, to me You have not given descendants, and a member of my household is my heir.** Since I do not have a son, and my steward will inherit me, this reward has no meaning for me. Although Eliezer is indeed a faithful and decent man, he is not my child. [4] **Behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying: This man** who is the steward of your house **shall not be your heir; rather, one who shall emerge from your loins, he shall be your heir.**

SELECTED RASHI

15:1 אחר הדברים האלה — Wherever the term אחר is used it signifies immediately after the preceding event; whilst אחרי signifies a long time afterwards. אחר הדברים האלה AFTER THESE THINGS means: after this miracle has been wrought for him in that he slew the kings and he was in great anxiety, saying, "Perhaps I have already received, in this God-given victory reward for all my good deeds" — therefore the Omnipresent said to him, אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך FEAR NOT ABRAM, I AM THY SHIELD against punishment: for you shall not be punished on account of all these people whom you have slain. And as for your being anxious regarding the receipt of any further reward, know that שכרך הרבה מאד THY REWARD WILL BE EXCEEDING GREAT (Genesis Rabbah 44:5).

לך לך

ה וַיּוֹצֵא אֹתוֹ הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַבֶּט־נָא
הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם־תּוּכַל לִסְפֹּר
אֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה יִהְיֶה זַרְעֶךָ׃

[5] He took him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He added, "So shall your offspring be."

THE NETZIV P. 60 Being numerous like dust could also mean being lowly

ו וְהֶאֱמִן בַּיהוָה וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ לּוֹ צְדָקָה׃

[6] And because he put his trust in the LORD, He reckoned it to his merit.



שישי

Sixth Aliyah

At the Brit Bein HaBetarim (Covenant Between the Pieces), God assures Avram that his descendants will endure exile and slavery before inheriting the land of Canaan, sealing this promise through a unique covenant ceremony. Later, after Sarai gives Hagar to Avram and tensions arise, God renews His covenant with Avram, now renamed Avraham, promising him multitudes of descendants and nations. AI SUMMARY

ז וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאוּר
כַּשְׂדִּים לָתֶת לְךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְרִשְׁתָּהּ׃

[7] Then He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to assign this land to you as a possession."

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[5] **He took him,** or instructed him to go, **outside, and said: Look now toward the heavens, and count the stars,** and see **if you can count them. And** after Abram had looked toward the heavens, **He said to him: So shall be your descendants;** they will be as numerous as the stars. [6] Although this seemed impossible to Abram, as he and his wife were elderly, **he believed in the Lord; and He,** God, **considered it,** Abram's faith, **for him as righteousness,** as a correct, upright, and proper act. [7] **He said to him: I am the Lord who took you out of Ur of the Chaldeans,** among other reasons, in order **to give you this land to inherit it.**

SELECTED RASHI

15:5 AND HE BROUGHT HIM FORTH OUTSIDE — Its real meaning is: He brought him outside his tent so that he could look at the stars. Its Midrashic explanation is: Go forth from (give up) your astrological speculations — that you have seen by the planets that you will not raise a son; Abram indeed may have no son but Abraham will have a son: Sarai may not bear a child but Sarah will bear. I will give you other names, and your destiny (מזל planet, luck) will be changed. Another explanation: He brought him forth from the terrestrial sphere, elevating him above the stars, and this is why He uses the term הבט "look", when He said "look at the heavens" — for this word signifies looking from above downward (Genesis Rabbah 44:12).

15:6 AND HE ACCOUNTED IT UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS — The Holy One, blessed be He, accounted it unto Abraham as a merit, because of the faith with which he had trusted in Him. Another explanation of במה אדע is: he did not, by these words, ask for a sign regarding this promise that he would possess the land, but he said to Him, "Tell me by what merit they (my descendants) will remain in it (the land)." God answered him, through the merit of the sacrifices (Taanit 27b).

ח וַיֹּאמַר אֲדֹנָי יֱהוִה בַּמָּה אֵדַע כִּי אִירָשֶׁנָּה׃

[8] And he said, "O Lord GOD, how shall I know that I am to possess it?"

ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו קְחָה לִי עֶגְלָה מְשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת וְעֵז מְשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת וְאַיִל מְשֻׁלָּשׁ וְתֹר וְגוֹזָל׃

[9] He answered, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young bird."

י וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ אֶת־כָּל־אֵלֶּה וַיְבַתֵּר אֹתָם בַּתָּוֶךְ וַיִּתֵּן אִישׁ־בִּתְרוֹ לִקְרַאת רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת־הַצִּפֹּר לֹא בָתָר׃

[10] He brought Him all these and cut them in two, placing each half opposite the other; but he did not cut up the bird.

יא וַיֵּרֶד הָעַיִט עַל־הַפְּגָרִים וַיַּשֵּׁב אֹתָם אַבְרָם׃

[11] Birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

יב וַיְהִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לָבוֹא וְתַרְדֵּמָה נָפְלָה עַל־אַבְרָם וְהִנֵּה אֵימָה חֲשֵׁכָה גְדֹלָה נֹפֶלֶת עָלָיו׃

[12] As the sun was about to set, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a great dark dread descended upon him.

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[8] **He said: My Lord God, how shall I know that I shall inherit it?** This statement does not indicate a lack of faith in the fulfillment of God's promise. However, the promise would come to pass only for Abram's descendants, none of whom had yet been born, while in the present there was no practical expression of his possession of the land. Hence, Abram requested some sort of assurance or deed that would serve as a confirmation and reinforcement of the covenant. [9] **He said to him: Take Me a triple heifer, and a triple female goat, and a triple ram, and a dove, and a young pigeon.** [10] **He took all these for him** after they had each been slaughtered, **divided them in the middle** into approximately equal halves, **and placed each half opposite the other,** with a gap separating them. **But the birds,** the dove and young pigeon, **he did not divide.** [11] **The birds of prey,** no specific bird, but birds of prey in general, **descended onto the carcasses.** These birds represent enemies who attempt to undermine the covenant. **And Abram drove them away.** He sought to fight these symbolic enemies and expel them. This indicates that the covenant and its fulfillment would encounter many future difficulties and threats, which must be opposed. Some explain that Abram put the pieces back to their initial state and miraculously restored them to life, as a sign of future renewal and resurrection. [12] This episode involved three stages: First came the initial prophetic vision, which Abram apparently experienced at night; this was followed by the preparations for the covenantal ritual and the descent of the birds of prey upon the carcasses, which occurred during the day. Then came the third and final stage, which is described in this verse: **It was when the sun was setting; a deep sleep fell upon Abram.** This was not an ordinary sleep due to tiredness, but an absolute inability to stay awake, as though an external factor put him in a trance. **And behold,** together with the deep sleep, **a dread, a great darkness,** a terrible fear devoid of specific content or meaning, **fell upon him.**

SELECTED RASHI

15:10 BUT THE BIRDS SPLIT HE NOT — Because other nations are compared to bulls, rams and goats, as it is said (Psalms 22:13) "Many bulls have encompassed me", and it says, (Daniel 8:20) "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia" and it further says, (Daniel 8:21) "And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece" — and Israel is compared to young doves, as it is written, (Song 2:14) ''O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock" — he therefore divided the animals indicating that other nations will gradually perish, but "the birds split he not", suggesting thereby that Israel will live forever (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 28). ואת הצפור לא בתר

יג וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יָדֹעַ תֵּדַע כִּי־גֵר | יִהְיֶה זַרְעֲךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וַעֲבָדוּם וְעִנּוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה:

13 And He said to Abram, "Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years;

יד וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָּן אָנֹכִי וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ בִּרְכֻשׁ גָּדוֹל:

14 but I will execute judgment on the nation they shall serve, and in the end they shall go free with great wealth.

טו וְאַתָּה תָּבוֹא אֶל־אֲבֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם תִּקָּבֵר בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה:

15 As for you, You shall go to your fathers in peace; You shall be buried at a ripe old age.

טז וְדוֹר רְבִיעִי יָשֻׁבוּ הֵנָּה כִּי לֹא־שָׁלֵם עֲוֹן הָאֱמֹרִי עַד־הֵנָּה:

16 And they shall return here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

יז וַיְהִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בָּאָה וַעֲלָטָה הָיָה וְהִנֵּה תַנּוּר עָשָׁן וְלַפִּיד אֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָבַר בֵּין הַגְּזָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:

17 When the sun set and it was very dark, there appeared a smoking oven, and a flaming torch which passed between those pieces.

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13 Here the covenant is formulated as a detailed, defined prophecy. **He,** God, **said to Abram: Know that your descendants shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs.** Indeed you will father children and will ultimately inherit the land, but your descendants shall not receive it immediately. The covenant will not be fulfilled in a smooth, straightforward manner. Beforehand, they will be foreigners and nomads like you are. However, in contrast to you, their wanderings will not be in this land that they are destined to inherit, but rather in a foreign place that is not their own. **And** furthermore, **they shall be enslaved to them,** the inhabitants of that foreign land; **and they shall oppress them** for **four hundred years.** The content of this prophecy fits the dread that Abram felt, but straightaway, God encouraged him with a promise: 14 **And also that nation that they shall serve, I will judge.** Your descendants will suffer there for reasons of My own, but the nation that enslaves them will be punished for doing so. **And afterwards,** when the designated hour arrives, **they,** your children, **will emerge with great property.** 15 But these travails will not affect you personally, **and you** will not be exiled or suffer, but rather, you **shall go to your fathers,** you will die and be united with your ancestors **in peace,** and **you shall** even **be buried at a good old age;** you will live a long and peaceful life.

16 **And the fourth generation** of your descendants **shall return here** to inherit the promised land, **for the iniquity of the Emorite is not complete until then.** 17 As stated above, the vision started when the sun began to set. **It was when the sun had set, and there was extreme darkness, and behold,** there was an appearance of **a smoking furnace,** a thick cloud of smoke, like the smoke that emerges from a furnace, **and a flaming torch that passed between those pieces.** The smoking furnace and smoking torch represent the Divine Presence passing between the pieces, thereby completing the covenantal ritual.

SELECTED RASHI

15:13 THAT THY SEED SHALL BE A STRANGER — From the birth of Isaac until Israel left Egypt was a period of 400 years. How so? Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born, and Jacob when he went down to Egypt himself stated, (Genesis 47:9) "The days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years", making together 190 years. In Egypt they were 210 years — corresponding to the numerical value of the word רדו (see Rashi in Genesis 42:2) — making altogether 400 years. If, however, you say that they were in Egypt 400 years — well, Kohath was one of those who went down to Egypt with Jacob; go and add up the years of Kohath (130), those of Amram (137), and the 80 years that Moses was old when Israel left Egypt, and you only have about 350, and you really have to deduct all the years that Kohath lived after Amram was born, and those that Amram lived after the birth of Moses (Megillah 9a).

15:14 AND ALSO THAT NATION — The word וגם and also—(that nation also will I judge)—suggests that other nations will be judged as well: it is used here to include the four Monarchies (of the book of Daniel) who also will perish because they enslaved Israel (Genesis Rabbah 44:19).

יח בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּרִית
לֵאמֹר לְזַרְעֲךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מִנְּהַר
מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר־פְּרָת:

18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I assign this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates:

יט אֶת־הַקֵּינִי וְאֶת־הַקְּנִזִּי וְאֶת הַקַּדְמֹנִי:

19 the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,

כ וְאֶת־הַחִתִּי וְאֶת־הַפְּרִזִּי וְאֶת־הָרְפָאִים:

20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

כא וְאֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְאֶת־הַגִּרְגָּשִׁי
וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי:

21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

א וְשָׂרַי אֵשֶׁת אַבְרָם לֹא יָלְדָה לוֹ וְלָהּ שִׁפְחָה
מִצְרִית וּשְׁמָהּ הָגָר:

1 Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar.

ב וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם הִנֵּה־נָא עֲצָרַנִי יְהוָה
מִלֶּדֶת בֹּא־נָא אֶל־שִׁפְחָתִי אוּלַי אִבָּנֶה מִמֶּנָּה
וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרָי:

2 And Sarai said to Abram, "Look, the LORD has kept me from bearing. Consort with my maid; perhaps I shall have a son through her." And Abram heeded Sarai's request.

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18 As befitting a formal covenant, its content is summarized in clear terms. **On that day, the Lord established a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants I have given this land** according to its greatest and fullest scope, **from the river of Egypt,** a name referring to the eastern branch of the Nile, often called the ravine of Egypt, which serves as the southwestern border of Canaan, **until the great river, the Euphrates River,** at its northeastern edge. 19 The promise of the inheritance of the land includes the removal of the nations currently living there: **the Kenites, the Kenizzites,** and **the Kadmonites.** The identity of these peoples is unknown, but it can be assumed that they dwelled outside the standard area known as Canaan. 20 **And the Hitites, the Perizites,** Canaanite nations; and **the Refaim,** the Anakim, mentioned above (14:5), and on several occasions in Deuteronomy (2:11, 20–21); 21 **the Emorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Yevusites.** 1 **And Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children,** despite the fact that they had been married for many years. According to some traditions, Abram was twenty-five years old, or even younger, when he married Sarai. **And she had an Egyptian maidservant, and her name was Hagar.** Hagar was apparently Sarai's personal maidservant. 2 **Sarai said to Abram: Please, behold, the Lord has kept me from bearing** children; I cannot give birth. **Please, consort with my maidservant; perhaps I shall be built** and have children **through her.** Sarai may have felt that she was nearing the end of her years of fertility, and she hoped that this act would cause her to give birth as well. **Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.** He did not initiate the matter or act for his own reasons, but cooperated with his wife, and complied for her sake alone.

SELECTED RASHI

16:1 A HANDMAID, AN EGYPTIAN — She was a daughter of Pharaoh; when he saw the miracles which had been performed for Sarah's take he said, "It is better for my daughter to be a handmaid in this man's house than be mistress in another man's house" (Genesis Rabbah 45:1).

16:2 I SHALL BE BUILDED UP THROUGH HER— through the merit that I admit her as a rival into my house.

ג וַתִּקַּח שָׂרַי אֶשֶׁת־אַבְרָם אֶת־הָגָר הַמִּצְרִית שִׁפְחָתָהּ מִקֵּץ עֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים לְשֶׁבֶת אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַתִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃

[3] So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years—and gave her to her husband Abram as concubine.

ד וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הָגָר וַתַּהַר וַתֵּרֶא כִּי הָרָתָה וַתֵּקַל גְּבִרְתָּהּ בְּעֵינֶיהָ׃

[4] He cohabited with Hagar and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was lowered in her esteem.

ה וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם חֲמָסִי עָלֶיךָ אָנֹכִי נָתַתִּי שִׁפְחָתִי בְּחֵיקֶךָ וַתֵּרֶא כִּי הָרָתָה וָאֵקַל בְּעֵינֶיהָ יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ׃

[5] And Sarai said to Abram, "The wrong done me is your fault! I myself put my maid in your bosom; now that she sees that she is pregnant, I am lowered in her esteem. The LORD decide between you and me!"

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[3] **Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maidservant, at the conclusion of ten years of Abram's residence in the land of Canaan.** Sarai's suggestion came after she and Abram had experienced many long journeys together. Ten years had passed since they had arrived in Canaan and they were still childless. **And she gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.** Hagar was apparently a full-fledged wife, not merely a maidservant or concubine. However, this change of status caused problems afterwards. [4] **He,** Abram, **consorted with Hagar, and** in a short time **she conceived; she saw that she conceived, and her mistress was diminished in her eyes.** Hagar saw her pregnancy as a sign of a new status. According to some Sages, she considered her conception an indication of moral superiority over her mistress. However, the change in her attitude toward Sarai can also be explained in a different manner. According to the laws and customs of several nations in ancient times, if a woman married to a man who has more than one wife bears him a child, especially a son, she becomes the primary wife. According to this, Hagar's pregnancy strengthened her position, and even if she did not openly disparage her mistress, her self-esteem would increase. [5] The situation was very delicate for Sarai, and her emotional response to Hagar's pregnancy was ambivalent. **Sarai said to Abram: The villainy done to me [ḥamasi] is on you;** you have done me wrong. In this context ḥamas does not bear its usual meaning of theft or robbery, but merely indicates an illegal or improper act. Sarai said: Of my own volition, **I gave my maidservant into your bosom. And** then **she saw that she conceived and I was diminished in her eyes.** Therefore, **the Lord shall judge between me and you.** This was not an outright accusation that Abram had harmed her, but a demand that he stand by her side in a more conspicuous manner.

SELECTED RASHI

16:4 HER MISTRESS WAS SLIGHTED IN HER EYES — She said, "As regards this woman Sarai, her conduct in private can certainly not be like that in public: she pretends to be a righteous woman, but she cannot really be righteous since all these years she has not been privileged to have children, whilst I have had that blessing from the first union" (Genesis Rabbah 45:4).

16:5 MY WRONG BE UPON THEE — The wrong done to me (חמסי)— the punishment for it I call down on you (עליך). "When you prayed to the Holy One, blessed be He, (15:2) 'what wilt Thou give me, seeing that I go childless', you prayed only on behalf of yourself whereas you should have prayed on behalf of both of us — then would I have been borne in mind (by God) together with you" (i.e. when you had the gift of a child it would have been "my" child also — not that of a strange woman). Besides this, you deprive me (חומס) of your protecting words since you hear how I am despised and yet you keep silent (Genesis Rabbah 45:5).

ו וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־שָׂרַי הִנֵּה שִׁפְחָתֵךְ בְּיָדֵךְ
עֲשִׂי־לָהּ הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינָיִךְ וַתְּעַנֶּהָ שָׂרַי וַתִּבְרַח
מִפָּנֶיהָ׃

[6] Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her.

RAMBAN & SFORNO P. 42 Why did Sarai treat Hagar harshly, and was it wrong

ז וַיִּמְצָאָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה עַל־עֵין הַמַּיִם בַּמִּדְבָּר
עַל־הָעַיִן בְּדֶרֶךְ שׁוּר׃

[7] An angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur,

ח וַיֹּאמַר הָגָר שִׁפְחַת שָׂרַי אָי־מִזֶּה בָאת וְאָנָה
תֵלֵכִי וַתֹּאמֶר מִפְּנֵי שָׂרַי גְּבִרְתִּי אָנֹכִי בֹרַחַת׃

[8] and said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" And she said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai."

ט וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה שׁוּבִי אֶל־גְּבִרְתֵּךְ
וְהִתְעַנִּי תַּחַת יָדֶיהָ׃

[9] And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your mistress, and submit to her harsh treatment."

י וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה
אֶת־זַרְעֵךְ וְלֹא יִסָּפֵר מֵרֹב׃

[10] And the angel of the LORD said to her, "I will greatly increase your offspring, And they shall be too many to count."

יא וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה הִנָּךְ הָרָה וְיֹלַדְתְּ בֵּן
וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל כִּי־שָׁמַע יְהוָה
אֶל־עָנְיֵךְ׃

[11] The angel of the LORD said to her further, "Behold, you are with child And shall bear a son; You shall call him Ishmael, For the LORD has paid heed to your suffering.

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[6] **Abram said to Sarai: Behold, your maid is in your hand.** Although she is pregnant with my child, I will not defend her; you can take her back as a maidservant. Apparently, Abram had not developed close ties with Hagar, or even if he had, he was willing to give her up for Sarai. **Do to her that which is favorable in your eyes.** So **Sarai treated her harshly.** The verse does not specify whether this harassment was mental or physical, if it involved reprimands, curses, the imposition of hard labor, or some other form of persecution. **And she,** Hagar, **fled from her.** [7] **The angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness at,** or next to, **the spring of water on the way to Shur,** in the Negev. [8] **He said: Hagar, Sarai's maidservant.** The angel addressed her by name; he knew who she was. **From where did you come, and where will you go? She said: From my mistress Sarai I flee.** [9] **The angel of the Lord said to her: Return to your mistress, and suffer under her hands.** So it has been decreed upon you, and this is the best thing for you. [10] **The angel of the Lord said to her: I will multiply your descendants;** the child in your womb will grow into a great nation. **And they shall not be counted due to their great number.** Hagar's child would also receive the blessing of fertility and strength granted to Abram. [11] **The angel of the Lord said to her: Behold,** as you already know, **you are with child, and** I am hereby informing you that you **shall bear a son,** not a daughter. **You shall call his name Ishmael, as the Lord has heard [shama] your suffering.**

יב וְהוּא יִהְיֶה֙ פֶּ֣רֶא אָדָ֔ם יָד֖וֹ בַּכֹּ֑ל וְיַ֤ד כֹּל֙ בּ֔וֹ
וְעַל־פְּנֵ֥י כָל־אֶחָ֖יו יִשְׁכֹּֽן׃

12 He shall be a wild ass of a man; His hand against everyone, And everyone's hand against him; He shall dwell alongside of all his kinsmen."

יג וַתִּקְרָ֞א שֵׁם־יְהוָ֣ה ׀ הַדֹּבֵ֣ר אֵלֶ֗יהָ אַתָּ֤ה אֵל֙ רֳאִ֔י
כִּ֣י אָמְרָ֔ה הֲגַ֥ם הֲלֹ֖ם רָאִ֑יתִי אַחֲרֵ֖י רֹאִֽי׃

13 And she called the LORD who spoke to her, "You Are El-roi," by which she meant, "Have I not gone on seeing after He saw me!"

יד עַל־כֵּ֛ן קָרָ֥א לַבְּאֵ֖ר בְּאֵ֣ר לַחַ֣י רֹאִ֑י הִנֵּ֥ה
בֵֽין־קָדֵ֖שׁ וּבֵ֥ין בָּֽרֶד׃

14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it is between Kadesh and Bered.—

טו וַתֵּ֤לֶד הָגָר֙ לְאַבְרָ֔ם בֵּ֖ן וַיִּקְרָ֨א אַבְרָ֜ם שֵׁם־בְּנ֗וֹ
אֲשֶׁ֤ר יָלְדָה֙ הָגָ֔ר יִשְׁמָעֵ֖אל׃

15 Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram gave the son that Hagar bore him the name Ishmael.

טז וְאַבְרָ֗ם בֶּן־שְׁמֹנִ֤ים שָׁנָה֙ וְשֵׁ֣שׁ שָׁנִ֔ים
בְּלֶ֥דֶת־הָגָ֖ר אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵ֑אל לְאַבְרָֽם׃

16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

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12 He shall be a wild man. He will have a reputation as a wild, uncontrolled, and unsettled figure. **His hand shall be against everyone and everyone's hand against him;** he will be continually involved in fights, quarrels, and wars. Perhaps the angel was alluding to the tendency of Ishmael and his descendants to choose the life of the nomad. As is typical of the nomadic existence, they would be drawn to banditry and suffer from endless conflicts. **And** yet, **he shall dwell among all his brethren.** He will achieve greatness in the eyes of his brothers and the members of his family. **13** Realizing that the angel was no more than a messenger, **she called,** described, **the name of the Lord who spoke to her** as: **You are the God of my vision,** the God who is seen, the God who reveals Himself. It is hard to ascertain much about the character of the quiet Hagar, but as one who came from the house of Abram, she must have absorbed something of his worldview. She was therefore aware that the angel was not a god, but a mouthpiece of God. **For she said: Have I seen** a revelation **here too, after my vision,** in addition to those I saw in Abram's house? Hagar had some prior familiarity with angels, as she had lived in a spiritual environment. She exclaimed in surprise that even here, in a distant wilderness, the God she had seen and known in her home had revealed Himself to her. **14 Therefore, one called the cistern Be'er Lahai Roi,** meaning the well [be'er] of the living [ḥai] God of my vision [ro'i]. **Behold,** this well is still known, and is mentioned several times later (24:62; 25:11); **it is** located **between Kadesh and Bered,** to the south of Canaan. **15** After returning home as instructed by the angel, **Hagar** ultimately **bore to Abram a son; Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.** It is possible that he had not heard from Hagar that this was the name recommended by the angel, and yet he selected it of his own accord, as the Lord had heard [shama] him and his misery as well, and had given him his firstborn son. **16 And Abram was eighty-six years old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.**

א וַיְהִי אַבְרָם בֶּן־תִּשְׁעִים שָׁנָה וְתֵשַׁע שָׁנִים וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי־אֵל שַׁדַּי הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי וֶהְיֵה תָמִים:

[1] When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless.

ב וְאֶתְּנָה בְרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וְאַרְבֶּה אוֹתְךָ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד:

[2] I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous."

ג וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר:

[3] Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further,

ד אֲנִי הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתָּךְ וְהָיִיתָ לְאַב הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם:

[4] "As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

ה וְלֹא־יִקָּרֵא עוֹד אֶת־שִׁמְךָ אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שִׁמְךָ אַבְרָהָם כִּי אַב־הֲמוֹן גּוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ:

[5] And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations.

ו וְהִפְרֵתִי אֹתְךָ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד וּנְתַתִּיךָ לְגוֹיִם וּמְלָכִים מִמְּךָ יֵצֵאוּ:

[6] I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you.

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[1] **Abram was ninety-nine years old, and the Lord appeared to Abram; He said to him: I am God Almighty.** According to the majority of commentaries, this name denotes God's might and involvement in reality, as the One who destroys and rebuilds new systems in the world. **Walk before Me,** serve Me, **and be wholehearted,** perfect. God had already established the Covenant between the Parts with Abram, a covenant that consisted of the eternal acquisition of the land of Canaan, and the continuation of his lineage. The covenant established here was a more personal one. [2] **I shall establish My covenant between Me and you.** This covenant was established with Abram as a private individual, and also with each of his descendants personally. **And** I **will multiply you exceedingly.** [3] **Abram fell upon his face,** in awe, due to the prophecy, and as an expression of his complete submission to whatever God was about to tell him, as the promise would no doubt include an obligation as well. **And God spoke with him, saying:** [4] **I, My covenant is hereby** being established **with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.** [5] This is a new status, and therefore **your name shall no longer be called Abram,** with its simple meaning of lofty [ram] father [av]. **But** rather, **your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.** As part of the covenant, the name given to him by his parents was exchanged for a name chosen by God. The meaning of this name is far more complex, and the verse itself explains it: The father of a multitude [av hamon], or the lofty father of a multitude. [6] God promised Abraham: As the father of a multitude of nations, **I will make you exceedingly fruitful, I will make you into** the progenitor of various **nations, and kings shall emerge from you** and rule, each in his own realm.

SELECTED RASHI

17:1 I AM GOD ALMIGHTY — I am He whose (ש) Godship suffices (די) for every creature (Genesis Rabbah 46:3), therefore, ''walk before Me", and I will be your God and Protector. Similarly, wherever in the Scriptures this Divine Name שדי occurs, it signifies the idea of His sufficiency — but it all depends upon the context as to what the "sufficiency" refers to.

17:1 AND BE PERFECT — This, too, is a command following upon the previous command: be whole-hearted in all the trials I impose upon you. According to the Midrash (Genesis Rabbah 46:4), however, it means: walk before Me by observing the precept of circumcision and through this you will become perfect, for so long as you are uncircumcised I regard you as having a blemish. Another explanation of היה תמים BE THOU PERFECT — at present you lack the power of controlling morally five organs, viz., two eyes, two ears and the membrum. Therefore will I add a letter (i. e. the letter ה the numerical value of which is five) to your name (אברם which equals 243) so that the total of the letters of your name (אברהם) will become 248, corresponding to the number of limbs of your body (cf. Nedarim 32b).

17:2 AND I WILL MAKE MY COVENANT — a covenant of love and a covenant regarding the land — to give it to you as an inheritance through your observance of this precept.

THE READING · GENESIS 17:7–27

שביעי

Seventh Aliyah



God establishes brit milah (the covenant of circumcision) as the eternal sign of the covenant, commanding that every male, homeborn or purchased, be circumcised at eight days old, while Sarai's name is changed to Sarah and she is promised a son, Isaac, through whom the covenant will continue, with Ishmael separately blessed to become a great nation. Abraham, at ninety-nine, immediately fulfills this command by circumcising himself, Ishmael, and all the males of his household that very day. AI SUMMARY

7 I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come.

ז וַהֲקִמֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם לִבְרִית עוֹלָם לִהְיוֹת לְךָ לֵאלֹהִים וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ׃

8 I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God."

ח וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֵת | אֶרֶץ מְגֻרֶיךָ אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן לַאֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים׃

9 God further said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant.

ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם וְאַתָּה אֶת־בְּרִיתִי תִשְׁמֹר אַתָּה וְזַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם׃

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7 **I will establish My covenant,** a private, personal connection **between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an eternal covenant, to be your God and for your descendants after you.** The God and King of the universe, who created the entire universe with all of the planets and stars, now established a personal, family covenant with Abraham and his descendants. This covenant expresses a unique relationship with them, different from His relationship with the rest of humanity, other creatures, and worlds. 8 As part of this covenant, **I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land of your residence, the entire land of Canaan, for an eternal portion.** Here God repeats His earlier promise, thereby declaring that this covenant does not replace the Covenant between the Parts as a new spiritual arrangement. Rather, it exists in addition to the previous covenant. **And** He added an additional promise: **I will be their God.** From this point onward one finds the phrase, God of Abraham. From now on God is not only the Creator of heaven and earth (14:19, 22), but also our God, the God of Abraham's descendants. 9 **God said to Abraham: And you, you shall observe My covenant; you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations,** as it includes an obligation on your part as well:

י זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין
זַרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ הִמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל־זָכָר:

[10] Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised.

יא וּנְמַלְתֶּם אֵת בְּשַׂר עָרְלַתְכֶם וְהָיָה לְאוֹת
בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם:

[11] You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

יב וּבֶן־שְׁמֹנַת יָמִים יִמּוֹל לָכֶם כָּל־זָכָר
לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם יְלִיד בָּיִת וּמִקְנַת־כֶּסֶף מִכֹּל
בֶּן־נֵכָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזַּרְעֲךָ הוּא:

[12] And throughout the generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days. As for the homeborn slave and the one bought from an outsider who is not of your offspring,

יג הִמּוֹל | יִמּוֹל יְלִיד בֵּיתְךָ וּמִקְנַת כַּסְפֶּךָ
וְהָיְתָה בְרִיתִי בִּבְשַׂרְכֶם לִבְרִית עוֹלָם:

[13] they must be circumcised, homeborn and purchased alike. Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact.

יד וְעָרֵל | זָכָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמּוֹל אֶת־בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ
וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מֵעַמֶּיהָ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי
הֵפָר:

[14] And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant."

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[10] **This is My covenant that you shall observe, between Me and you and between your descendants after you: Circumcise every male among you.** [11] **You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it,** this cutting of the flesh, **shall be a mark of a covenant between Me and you.** The covenant is the relationship itself, while the circumcision serves as a concrete symbol, an indication of, and reminder about the covenant. [12] This verse constitutes a normative commandment that forms a binding obligation in Jewish law, similar in style to the many commandments found in the later books of the Torah: **And one who is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male throughout your generations,** whether **born in the house,** an actual member of the family or anyone else born into the household, even if not a biological descendant of Abraham, **or purchased with silver,** a slave purchased **from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.** Not only must Abraham's descendants be circumcised, but all males who are his property. The covenant applies to these people from the moment of their birth, although the mark of the covenant is placed on their flesh only on the eighth day. [13] **Circumcise those born in your house, or those purchased with your silver, and** the mark of **My covenant shall be in your flesh for an eternal covenant** throughout the generations. [14] **And the uncircumcised male** among your descendants **who shall not circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that soul shall be excised from his people.** This is the most severe of punishments; the soul is cut off and destroyed, a penalty that begins with death and continues in the world of the souls after death. An individual who chooses to remain uncircumcised is deserving of such a severe punishment, since **he has breached My covenant,** by essentially declaring that he wants no part in it.

טוַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם שָׂרַי אִשְׁתְּךָ
לֹא־תִקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמָהּ שָׂרָי כִּי שָׂרָה שְׁמָהּ׃

15 And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah.

BERESHIT RABBAH 47:1 ONLINE AT TORAHFORM.COM Why Sarah's name change meant she outranked Abraham

טזוּבֵרַכְתִּי אֹתָהּ וְגַם נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנָּה לְךָ בֵּן
וּבֵרַכְתִּיהָ וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם מַלְכֵי עַמִּים מִמֶּנָּה
יִהְיוּ׃

16 I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her."

יזוַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחָק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ
הַלְּבֶן מֵאָה־שָׁנָה יִוָּלֵד וְאִם־שָׂרָה
הֲבַת־תִּשְׁעִים שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד׃

17 Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?"

יחוַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים לוּ יִשְׁמָעֵאל
יִחְיֶה לְפָנֶיךָ׃

18 And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live by Your favor!"

יטוַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֲבָל שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ יֹלֶדֶת לְךָ
בֵּן וְקָרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק וַהֲקִמֹתִי
אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתּוֹ לִבְרִית עוֹלָם לְזַרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו׃

19 God said, "Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will maintain My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring to come.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

15 **God said to Abraham,** referring to him by his new name, by which he was to be forever known from that moment forward: **Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, as Sarah is her name.** 16 **I will bless her** with various blessings, **and I will also give you a son from her; I will bless her, and she** too **shall become nations [goyim].** The word goyim can also mean tribes or leaders (see 20:4, 25:23) **. Kings of peoples shall be** descended **from her.** 17 In the wake of these declarations, **Abraham fell upon his face** in submission, **and he laughed. He said in his heart: Shall a child be born to one who is one hundred years old?** Abraham was ninety-nine at the time. If Sarah were to become pregnant immediately, he would be one hundred years old at the time of the child's birth. **And if it is Sarah, shall a ninety-year-old woman give birth?** This certainly goes against the laws of nature. 18 **Abraham said to God: If only Ishmael shall live before You.** You have promised me miracles, which go against the laws of nature. However, I already have a son, Ishmael. If only he could be considered my son and receive this blessing. 19 **God said: But** ndeed, in truth, **Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac.** This name, which means "he will laugh," is undoubtedly connected to Abraham's laughter, as well as to that of Sarah, as seen below. **And I will keep My covenant with him for an eternal covenant for his descendants after him.** He, and not Ishmael, is the son through whom the special covenant will be preserved.

SELECTED RASHI

17:15 THOU SHALT NOT CALL HER NAME SARAI which means "my princess"— a princess to me and not to others — BUT SARAH, in a more general sense, SHALL BE HER NAME: she shall be princess over all (Berakhot 13a).

17:17 AND ABRAHAM FELL UPON HIS FACE AND LAUGHED — This word ויצחק Onkelos translates by וחדי which signifies joy ("and he rejoiced") but the similar verb in the case of Sarah (ותצחק Genesis 18:12) he translates as meaning laughter. From this you may understand that Abraham had faith and rejoiced, and that Sarah had no faith and sneered, and that is why God was angry with Sarah (when she laughed) but was not angry with Abraham.

כ וְלִישְׁמָעֵאל שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ הִנֵּה | בֵּרַכְתִּי אֹתוֹ
וְהִפְרֵיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֹתוֹ בִּמְאֹד מְאֹד
שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר נְשִׂיאִם יוֹלִיד וּנְתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל׃

[20] As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation.

כא וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי אָקִים אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד לְךָ
שָׂרָה לַמּוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בַּשָּׁנָה הָאַחֶרֶת׃

[21] But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year."

כב וַיְכַל לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ וַיַּעַל אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל אַבְרָהָם׃

[22] And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.

כג וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ וְאֵת
כָּל־יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־מִקְנַת כַּסְפּוֹ כָּל־זָכָר
בְּאַנְשֵׁי בֵּית אַבְרָהָם וַיָּמָל אֶת־בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתָם
בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים׃

[23] Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all his homeborn slaves and all those he had bought, every male in Abraham's household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day, as God had spoken to him.

BERESHIT RABBAH 42:8 ONLINE AT TORAHFORM.COM Even selfish actions can earn reward for the good done

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[20] **And** as **for** your request with regard to **Ishmael, I have heard you,** and your wish shall not be entirely unfulfilled. **Behold, I** have **blessed him, I will make him fruitful, and I will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him** too into **a great nation.** [21] **But My covenant I will keep with Isaac.** God stressed the difference between Abraham's two sons. Ishmael, his first son, who was raised in his home and was undoubtedly beloved by his father, was blessed with great fertility and power. However, the unique personal connection embodied by the covenant was reserved for Isaac alone, **whom Sarah shall bear** to **you at the designated time,** on the same date, **in another year.** [22] **He,** God, **concluded speaking with him, and God ascended from upon Abraham.** By speaking to the prophet, God, as it were, descends to him, and when the prophecy concludes, He ascends back to the heights. [23] **Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all those born in his house, and all those purchased with his silver, every male among the people of Abraham's household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day,** the same day on which he had received God's command, **as God had spoken with him,** in spite of his advanced age.



THE READING · GENESIS 17:24–27

מפטיר

Maftir

Abraham fulfilled the mitzvah (commandment) of brit milah (circumcision) at age ninety-nine, together with his son Ishmael at age thirteen, and on that very day every male in his household —whether born into it or acquired from outside—was circumcised alongside him. This immediate, wholehearted compliance demonstrates Abraham's complete devotion in carrying out G-d's command without delay. AI SUMMARY

כד וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־תִּשְׁעִים וְתֵשַׁע שָׁנָה בְּהִמֹּלוֹ בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ׃

24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin,

כה וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ בֶּן־שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בְּהִמֹּלוֹ אֵת בְּשַׂר עָרְלָתוֹ׃

25 and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

כו בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִמּוֹל אַבְרָהָם וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּנוֹ׃

26 Thus Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day;

כז וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי בֵיתוֹ יְלִיד בָּיִת וּמִקְנַת־כֶּסֶף מֵאֵת בֶּן־נֵכָר נִמֹּלוּ אִתּוֹ׃

27 and all his household, his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. Although significantly younger than his father, circumcision is difficult at that age as well, for a variety of reasons. **26 On that very day, Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27 And all the people of his household,** whether **born in the house or purchased with silver from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.**

SELECTED RASHI

17:25 When he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin. Concerning Avraham it does not state אֶת, because he only lacked cutting the flesh, for [the membrane] had already dissolved. But, Yishmael who was a lad required [actual] cutting the foreskin and tearing open the corona membrane. Therefore, concerning him אֶת is said.



HAFTARAH · ISAIAH 40:27-41:16

הפטרה

Haftarah

Israel's complaint that God has ignored its cause is answered with the assurance that the eternal Creator never tires and grants strength to the weary who trust in Him, even as He directs the course of nations and empires. Though Israel may feel lowly as a worm, God promises as Redeemer to uphold, help, and transform His chosen servant into an instrument of strength against all who oppose it. AI SUMMARY

כז לָמָּה תֹאמַר יַעֲקֹב וּתְדַבֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל נִסְתְּרָה
דַרְכִּי מֵיְהוָה וּמֵאֱלֹהַי מִשְׁפָּטִי יַעֲבוֹר׃

כח הֲלוֹא יָדַעְתָּ אִם־לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם |
יְהוָה בּוֹרֵא קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ לֹא יִיעַף וְלֹא יִיגָע
אֵין חֵקֶר לִתְבוּנָתוֹ׃

כט נֹתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ וּלְאֵין אוֹנִים עָצְמָה יַרְבֶּה׃

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, Why declare, O Israel, "My way is hid from the LORD, My cause is ignored by my God"?

28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is God from of old, Creator of the earth from end to end, He never grows faint or weary, His wisdom cannot be fathomed.

29 He gives strength to the weary, Fresh vigor to the spent.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

27 The infiniteness of the Creator includes His knowledge and His providence: **Why do you say, Jacob, and speak, Israel: My way is hidden from the Lord,** He does not see me, **and from my God my just deserts will have passed,** He is oblivious to the reward or punishment that I deserve. You say: God does not watch over me, and that is why I suffer so much. 28 **Did you not know, did you not hear, the Lord is the eternal God, Creator of** everything until **the ends of the earth; He neither tires nor wearies; there is no scrutinizing His understanding.** It is impossible to investigate, understand, or define His wisdom. 29 **He gives strength to the tired, and to the powerless He increases might.**

RASHI

40:27 Why should you say My people ([K'li Paz, mss.:] the people of) Jacob, and speak in exile.

40:27 My way has been hidden from the Lord He hid from before His eyes all that we served Him, and gave those who did not know Him, dominion over us.

40:27 and from my God, my judgment passes? He ignores the judgment of the good reward He should have paid our forefathers and us.

40:28 the Creator of the ends of the earth...there is no fathoming His understanding And One who has such strength and such wisdom—He knows the thoughts. Why does He delay your benefit, only to terminate the transgression and to expiate the sin through afflictions.

40:29 Who gives the tired strength And who will eventually renew strength for your tiredness.

הפטרה

ל וְיֵעָפוּ נְעָרִים וְיִגָּעוּ וּבַחוּרִים כָּשׁוֹל יִכָּשְׁלוּ׃

[30] Youths may grow faint and weary, And young men stumble and fall;

לא וְקוֵי יְהוָה יַחֲלִיפוּ כֹחַ יַעֲלוּ אֵבֶר כַּנְּשָׁרִים
יָרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיגָעוּ יֵלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיעָפוּ׃

[31] But they who trust in the LORD shall renew their strength As eagles grow new plumes: They shall run and not grow weary, They shall march and not grow faint.

א הַחֲרִישׁוּ אֵלַי אִיִּים וּלְאֻמִּים יַחֲלִיפוּ כֹחַ
יִגְּשׁוּ אָז יְדַבֵּרוּ יַחְדָּו לַמִּשְׁפָּט נִקְרָבָה׃

[1] Stand silent before Me, coastlands, And let nations renew their strength. Let them approach to state their case; Let us come forward together for argument.

ב מִי הֵעִיר מִמִּזְרָח צֶדֶק יִקְרָאֵהוּ לְרַגְלוֹ יִתֵּן
לְפָנָיו גּוֹיִם וּמְלָכִים יַרְדֶּה יִתֵּן כֶּעָפָר חַרְבּוֹ
כְּקַשׁ נִדָּף קַשְׁתּוֹ׃

[2] Who has roused a victor from the East, Summoned him to His service? Has delivered up nations to him, And trodden sovereigns down? Has rendered their swords like dust, Their bows like wind-blown straw?

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[30] The prophet now explains in detail: **The youths will be tired and weary and the young men,** who are in the prime of their strength, **will falter.** When they rely solely on their own strength, even the young and strong will tire and stumble. [31] **But** in contrast, **those who long for the Lord will renew their strength; they will grow** new **wings like eagles,** whose wing feathers regrow after their old feathers have molted. **They will run and will not weary, they will walk and will not tire.** Those that are connected to the source of strength will have that strength renewed. Therefore, you, the exiled nation, should not despair, as you can replenish your strength from the Creator. [1] The prophet addresses the distant nations in the name of God: **Be silent for me** and listen, distant **lands of the sea, and let nations renew their strength; let them approach and then speak; together, let us approach for judgment,** out of closeness rather than from fear. This is not necessarily a judgment against you, but a discussion of reality. [2] **Who has awakened one from the Eastfor whom justice** or victory **is declared in his wake?** The prophet refers to a specific person from an unknown time who brings salvation. **He will subdue nations before him and will subjugate kings; He will set his sword like dust, his bow like windblown straw.** Swords and bows are at his disposal like dust and straw. Alternatively, he will transform the enemy into dust and straw with his sword and bow.

RASHI

40:30 Now youths shall become tired Heb. נְעָרִים. The might of your enemies who are devoid (מְנֹעָרִים) of commandments, shall become faint.

40:30 and young men shall stumble Those who are now mighty and strong, shall stumble, but you, who put your hope in the Lord shall gain new strength and power.

40:31 wings [The Hebrew אבר means] a wing.

41:1 Be silent to Me in order to hear My words.

41:1 islands Heathens ([mss. Kli Paz:] nations).

41:1 shall renew [their] strength They shall adorn themselves and strengthen themselves with all their might perhaps they will succeed in their judgment by force.

41:1 they shall approach here, and then, when they approach, they shall speak.

41:1 to judgment let us draw near to reprove them to their faces.

41:2 Who aroused from the East one whom righteousness accompanied? Who aroused Abraham to bring him from Aram which is in the East and the righteousness that he would perform that was opposite his feet wherever he went.

41:2 He placed nations before him He, Who aroused him to leave his place to cause him to move, He placed before him four kings and their hosts.

41:2 He gave him dominion Heb. יִרְדֶּה, like יִרְדֶּה.

41:2 He made his sword like dust [Jonathan paraphrases:] He cast slain ones before his sword like dust. He suffered his sword to take its toll of casualties as [numerous as] grains of dust, and his bow He suffered to take its toll of casualties who would fall like wind blown stubble.

ג יִרְדְּפֵם יַעֲבֹר שָׁלוֹם אֹרַח בְּרַגְלָיו לֹא יָבוֹא׃

[3] He pursues them, he goes on unscathed; No shackle is placed on his feet.

ד מִי־פָעַל וְעָשָׂה קֹרֵא הַדֹּרוֹת מֵרֹאשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן וְאֶת־אַחֲרֹנִים אֲנִי־הוּא׃

[4] Who has wrought and achieved this? He who announced the generations from the start— I, the LORD, who was first And will be with the last as well.

ה רָאוּ אִיִּים וְיִרָאוּ קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ יֶחֱרָדוּ קָרְבוּ וַיֶּאֱתָיוּן׃

[5] The coastlands look on in fear, The ends of earth tremble. They draw near and come;

ו אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יַעְזֹרוּ וּלְאָחִיו יֹאמַר חֲזָק׃

[6] Each one helps the other, Saying to his fellow, "Take courage!"

ז וַיְחַזֵּק חָרָשׁ אֶת־צֹרֵף מַחֲלִיק פַּטִּישׁ אֶת־הוֹלֶם פָּעַם אֹמֵר לַדֶּבֶק טוֹב הוּא וַיְחַזְּקֵהוּ בְמַסְמְרִים לֹא יִמּוֹט׃

[7] The woodworker encourages the smith; He who flattens with the hammer [Encourages] him who pounds the anvil. He says of the riveting, "It is good!" And he fixes it with nails, That it may not topple.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

[3] **He will pursue them,** the nations and kings, **passing safely.** Alternatively: He will overtake those he chases; **he will not need to go on a path on his feet.** He does not require the use of a side path in which to hide; rather, he uses the main road. Some commentaries explain that he will pass safely on new paths. Yet another interpretation is that he will not need to retreat in the direction in which he came, or that he will not be confronted by the enemy on his way. [4] **Who acted and accomplished it,** all this? It is **He who proclaimed** or fixed the history of **the generations from the beginning. I, the Lord, am first** of all that exists, **and** I am here **with the last,** with you, **I am He.** [5] **The lands of the sea,** that is, the distant nations, **saw** all these great events, **and feared; the ends of the earth trembled; they,** these nations, **converged and came** together. All of them were attempting to defend themselves against the threat of the great king by relying on their gods. [6] **Each would help his neighbor and would say to his brother: Be strong.** Everyone worked together to fight the enemy. [7] **The carpenter would encourage the smith; the one who smooths** utensils and straightens them **with a hammer** would encourage **the one who strikes at the anvil.** Upon completion, the one who fashions the utensil is **saying of the join: It is good,** the fusing of the various components of the utensils was performed well; and **he** then **strengthened it with nails,** so that **it would not fall apart.**

RASHI

41:3 He pursued them and passed on safely He traversed all his fords safely; he did not stumble when he pursued them.

41:3 a path upon which he had not come with his feet A road upon which he had not come previously with his feet. [The future tense of] יָבוֹא means that he was not accustomed to come.

41:4 Who worked and did for him all this? He Who called the generations from the beginning, to Adam, He did this also for Abraham.

41:4 I, the Lord, am first to perform wonders and to aid.

41:4 and with the last ones I am He Also with you, the last sons, I will be, and I will aid you.

41:5 The islands shall see [lit. saw.] The heathens shall see the mighty deeds that I will perform, and they shall fear.

41:5 they have approached and come One to another they will gather to war when they see the redemption.

41:6 Each one…his fellow etc. He shall say, "Strengthen yourself" for war, perhaps their gods will protect them [lit. stand up for them].

41:7 And the craftsman strengthened [i.e.,] the one who molds the idol.

41:7 the smith who plates it with gold.

41:7 the one who smoothes with the hammer The final stage, when he taps lightly to flatten out the work.

41:7 the one who wields the sledge hammer He is the one who commences on it when it is a block, and beats it with all his might.

41:7 he says of the cement, "It is good," Heb. דֶּבֶק. He alludes to those who seek suitable ground upon which to adhere iron plates.

41:7 דֶּבֶק is soudure in French, weld.

41:7 and he strengthened it The idol.

41:7 with nails that it should not move All of them will strengthen each other.

8 But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, Seed of Abraham My friend—

ח וְאַתָּה֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל עַבְדִּ֔י יַעֲקֹ֖ב אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּחַרְתִּ֑יךָ
זֶ֖רַע אַבְרָהָ֥ם אֹהֲבִֽי׃

9 You whom I drew from the ends of the earth And called from its far corners, To whom I said: You are My servant; I chose you, I have not rejected you—

ט אֲשֶׁ֣ר הֶחֱזַקְתִּ֔יךָ מִקְצ֖וֹת הָאָ֑רֶץ וּמֵאֲצִילֶ֖יהָ
קְרָאתִ֣יךָ וָאֹמַ֔ר לְךָ֥ עַבְדִּי־אָ֖תָּה בְּחַרְתִּ֣יךָ וְלֹ֥א
מְאַסְתִּֽיךָ׃

10 Fear not, for I am with you, Be not frightened, for I am your God; I strengthen you and I help you, I uphold you with My victorious right hand.

י אַל־תִּירָ֣א כִּֽי עִמְּךָ־אָ֔נִי אַל־תִּשְׁתָּ֖ע כִּֽי־אֲנִ֣י
אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ אִמַּצְתִּ֙יךָ֙ אַף־עֲזַרְתִּ֔יךָ אַף־תְּמַכְתִּ֖יךָ
בִּימִ֥ין צִדְקִֽי׃

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

8 The rebuke, fear, and trembling will be the lot of the other nations; **but it is you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, descendants of Abraham who loved Me;** 9 **whom I have taken** for Myself **from the ends of the earth, and from its noblemen I called you,** to leave the domain of these other nations; **I said to you: You are My servant, I chose you and did not spurn you** during the long exile; 10 even if the whole world will shake, **do not fear, as I am with you; do not waver** from your path, **as I am your God** under all conditions; **I have made you firm; indeed, I have helped you, even supported you with My righteous right hand.** God promises His nation here that He will protect them from any harm that may befall them.

RASHI

41:8 But you, Israel My servant and I am obliged to help you. The end of this sentence is (infra 10): "Do not fear." This appears to me to be the sequence of the section according to its simple meaning. But the Midrash Aggadah in Gen. Rabbah 44:7 expounds the entire section as alluding to Malchizedek and Abraham.

41:8 [5] Islands saw the war and feared. Shem [Malchizedek] feared Abraham, lest he say to him, You begot these wicked men in the world. And Abraham feared Shem, since he slew his sons, the people of Elam, who was descended from Shem.

41:8 islands Just as the islands of the sea are distinguished and recognized in the sea, so were Abraham and Shem distinguished in the world.

41:8 [6] Each one aided his fellow This one [Shem] aided this one [Abraham] with blessings, "Blessed be Abram" (Gen. 14:19), and this one [Abraham] aided this one [Shem] with gifts, "And he gave him tithe from everything" (ibid. verse 20).

41:8 [7] And the craftsman strengthened This is Shem, who was a blacksmith, to make nails and bars for the ark.

41:8 the smith This is Abraham, who purified (צוֹרֵף) the people, to bring them near to God [lit. to Heaven].

41:8 the sledge hammer This is Abraham, who smote (הִלַּם) all these kings at one time.

41:8 He says of the cement Heb. דָּבֵק. The nations said, It is good to cleave to this one's God [rather than to Nimrod's idols].

41:8 And he strengthened him Shem strengthened Abraham to cleave to the Holy One, blessed be He, and not to move.

41:8 [8] And you, Israel My servant Abraham, who was not descended from righteous men—I did all this for him, and you, Israel My servant, who belong to Me by dint of two forefathers.

41:8 the seed of Abraham, who loved Me who did not recognize Me because of the admonition and the teaching of his fathers, but out of love.

41:9 whom I grasped Heb. הֶחֱזַקְתִּיךָ. I took you for My share. Comp. (Ex. 4:4) "And he stretched out his hand and grasped (וַיַּחֲזֵק) it."

41:9 from the ends of the earth from the other nations.

41:9 and from its nobles from the greatest of them.

41:9 I called you by name for My share, "My firstborn son, Israel" (ibid. v. 22).

41:9 and I did not despise you like Esau, as it is said (Malachi 1:3), "And Esau I hated."

41:10 be not discouraged Heb. אַל תִּשְׁתָּע. Let your heart not melt like wax (שַׁעֲוָה). This is the rule: Every word whose first radical is 'shin,' when it is used in the reflexive present, past, or future, the 'tav' separates it and enters between the first two radicals. Comp. (infra 49:16) "And He was astounded (וַיִּשְׁתּוֹמֵם)"; (Micah 6:16) "For the statutes of Omri shall be observed (וַיִּשְׁתַּמֵּר)"; (I Sam. 1: 14) "will you be drunk (תִּשְׁתַּכְּרִין)?"; (Job 30:16) "My soul is poured out (תִּשְׁתַּפֵּךְ)."

יא הֵן֙ יֵבֹ֣שׁוּ וְיִכָּלְמ֔וּ כֹּ֖ל הַנֶּחֱרִ֣ים בָּ֑ךְ יִהְיוּ֙ כְּאַ֣יִן וְיֹאבְד֔וּ אַנְשֵׁ֖י רִיבֶֽךָ׃

11 Shamed and chagrined shall be All who contend with you; They who strive with you Shall become as naught and shall perish.

יב תְּבַקְּשֵׁ֖ם וְלֹ֣א תִמְצָ֑אֵם אַנְשֵׁ֤י מַצֻּתֶךָ֙ יִהְיוּ֙ כְּאַ֣יִן וּכְאֶ֔פֶס אַנְשֵׁ֖י מִלְחַמְתֶּֽךָ׃

12 You may seek, but shall not find Those who struggle with you; Less than nothing shall be The men who battle against you.

יג כִּ֣י אֲנִ֤י יְהוָה֙ אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ מַחֲזִ֖יק יְמִינֶ֑ךָ הָאֹמֵ֣ר לְךָ֔ אַל־תִּירָ֖א אֲנִ֥י עֲזַרְתִּֽיךָ׃

13 For I the LORD am your God, Who grasped your right hand, Who say to you: Have no fear; I will be your help.

יד אַל־תִּירְאִ֤י תּוֹלַ֙עַת֙ יַעֲקֹ֔ב מְתֵ֖י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל אֲנִ֥י עֲזַרְתִּיךָ֖ נְאֻם־יְהוָ֔ה וְגֹאֲלֵ֖ךְ קְד֥וֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃

14 Fear not, O worm Jacob, O men of Israel: I will help you —declares the LORD— I your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

טו הִנֵּ֤ה שַׂמְתִּיךְ֙ לְמוֹרַ֣ג חָרוּץ֙ חָדָ֔שׁ בַּ֖עַל פִּיפִיּ֑וֹת תָּדוֹשׁ֙ הָרִ֣ים וְתָדֵ֔ק וּגְבָעוֹת֙ כַּמֹּ֖ץ תָּשִֽׂים׃

15 I will make of you a threshing board, A new thresher, with many spikes; You shall thresh mountains to dust, And make hills like chaff.

טז תִּזְרֵ֙ם֙ וְר֣וּחַ תִּשָּׂ֔א וּסְעָרָ֖ה תָּפִ֣יץ אוֹתָ֑ם וְאַתָּ֥ה תָגִ֛יל בַּיהוָ֖ה בִּקְד֣וֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵ֥ל תִּתְהַלָּֽל׃

16 You shall winnow them And the wind shall carry them off; The whirlwind shall scatter them. But you shall rejoice in the LORD, And glory in the Holy One of Israel.

THE STEINSALTZ TANAKH

11 Behold, all who provoke you will be ashamed and humiliated, and the men who quarrel with you will be like nothing and perish. 12 You will seek them, the people who contend with you, but you will not find them; the people who make war on you will disappear and **be like nothing and naught. 13 For I am the Lord your God, supporting your right hand, who says to you: Do not fear, I help you. 14 Do not fear, worm of Jacob, people of Israel; I am your help – the utterance of the Lord – and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.** 15 On the contrary; despite your appearance as a fragile worm, **behold, I will turn you into a sharp new threshing board with teeth; you,** the threshing board, **will thresh mountains, and pulverize them** into small pieces, **and make hills like chaff** through your threshing. The nation of Israel will trample over other nations and kingdoms. 16 **You will winnow them,** the enemies, **and the wind will carry them** away, **and the storm will scatter them.** In contrast to the terror and trembling that will envelop the other nations in light of the global transformations described here, the prophet assures Israel: **But you will rejoice in the Lord, you will be glorified in the Holy One of Israel.**

RASHI

41:14 O worm of Jacob Heb. תּוֹלַעַת. The family of Jacob, which is weak like a worm, which has no strength except in its mouth. תּוֹלַעַת is vermener in O.F., [vermisseau in Modern French, a worm].

41:14 the number of Israel Heb. מְתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, the number of Israel.

41:15 a...grooved threshing sledge It is a heavy wooden implement made with many grooves, similar to the ironsmiths' tool known as 'lime' in French, a file, and they drag it over the straw of the ears of grain and it cuts them until they become fine straw.

41:15 new When it is new, before the points of its grooves are smoothed off, it cuts very much, but when it becomes old, the points of the grooves are smoothed off.

41:15 with sharp points Heb. פִּיפִיּוֹת. Those are the points of the grooves.

41:15 you shall thresh the mountains kings and princes.

41:16 You shall winnow them You shall scatter them, as with a pitchfork, to the wind.

41:16 and a wind shall carry them off by themselves to Gehinnom.



מדרש

Midrash

2 chosen for the booklet · 3 more online at torahform.com/lech-lecha

BERESHIT RABBAH 39:1 · ON GENESIS 12:1 38

How Avraham first discovered there is a G-d

BERESHIT RABBAH 39:2 · ON GENESIS 12:1 38

Why did Abraham need to leave home to become great?

ON GENESIS 12:1

How Avraham first discovered there is a G-d

Bereshit Rabbah 39:1

Rabbi Yitzchak, through the parable of a traveler who sees a lit building and wonders whether it has an owner, teaches that Avraham looked upon the world and perceived that it must have a Master guiding it. In response, the Holy One blessed be He revealed Himself to Avraham, declaring, "I am the owner of the world," affirming that his perception was correct. This encounter is identified as the moment described in "The Lord said to Abram," showing that Avraham's call began with his own independent recognition of G-d as Creator and Ruler of existence. AI SUMMARY

“The Lord said to Abram: Go you, from your land, and from your birthplace, and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1). “The Lord said to Abram: Go you, from your land…” – Rabbi Yitzḥak began: “Listen, daughter, see, and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father’s house” (Psalms 45:11).

Rabbi Yitzḥak said: This is analogous to one who was passing from place to place, and saw a building with a [candle] burning in it. He said: ‘Is it possible that this building has no one in charge of it?’ The owner of the building looked out at him and said: ‘I am the owner of the building.’

So, because Abraham our patriarch was saying: ‘Is it possible that this world is without someone in charge?’ The Holy One blessed be He looked at him and said to him: ‘I am the owner of the world.’ “The king will desire your beauty, as he is your master” (Psalms 45:12) – to show your beauty in the world. “And bow to him” (Psalms 45:12) – that is, “the Lord said to Abram.”

ON GENESIS 12:1

Why did Abraham need to leave home to become great?

Bereshit Rabbah 39:2

Abraham is compared to a sealed flask of balsam oil whose fragrance remains hidden while it stays in its corner, but spreads once the flask is moved. Likewise, God tells Abraham that only by leaving his place and journeying forth—heeding the call of Lech Lecha (Go forth)—will his greatness and name become known throughout the world. Movement and change, not stagnation, are what reveal Abraham's true spiritual stature. AI SUMMARY

“The Lord said to Abram” – Rabbi Berekhya began: “By the fragrance of your good oils, your name is like poured oil” (Song of Songs 1:3). Rabbi Berekhya said: To what was Abraham our patriarch comparable? To a flask of balsam oil surrounded with a fastened cover, that was placed in a corner and its fragrance did not diffuse. When it was moved, its fragrance diffused. So, the Holy One

blessed be He said to Abraham our patriarch: ‘Move yourself from one place to another place, and your name will be exalted in the world.’

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3 more midrashim

Bereshit Rabbah 44:1, Bereshit Rabbah 42:8, Bereshit Rabbah 47:1, each to read or print.

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מפרשים

Classical Commentaries

4 chosen for the booklet

RAMBAN · GENESIS 12:10 41
Avram's trip to Egypt foretold his descendants' future exile

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RAMBAN

Avram's trip to Egypt foretold his descendants' future exile

Genesis 12:10

Ramban reads Avram's descent to Egypt as a prophetic template, maintaining that every detail of this episode foreshadows precisely what would later befall his descendants—famine, oppression, plunder of wives, divine plagues, and a wealthy exodus—while also faulting Avram for endangering Sarai and for leaving the Promised Land during famine, sins he says led to the decree of Egyptian exile. Radak instead treats the famine as one of Avram's ten divine trials, praising him for not questioning G-d's ways despite the apparent contradiction with the promise of blessing, and explains the practical reason for choosing Egypt (its Nile-based, drought-resistant agriculture) and that he intended only a temporary sojourn, not permanent settlement. AI SUMMARY

"There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land."

AND THERE WAS A FAMINE IN THE LAND. — Now Abraham went down to Egypt on account of the famine to dwell there in order to keep himself alive in the days of the drought, but the Egyptians oppressed him for no reason [and attempted] to take his wife. The Holy One, blessed be He, avenged their cause with great plagues, and brought him forth from there with cattle, with silver, and with gold, and Pharaoh even commanded his men to escort them from the land. He thereby alluded to Abraham that his children would go down to Egypt on account of the famine to dwell there in the land, and the Egyptians would do them evil and take the women from them, just as Pharaoh said, And every daughter ye shall save alive, but the Holy One, blessed be He, would avenge their cause with great plagues until He would bring them forth with silver and gold, sheep and oxen, very rich in cattle, with the Egyptians pressuring to send them out of the land. Nothing was lacking in all the events that happened to the patriarch that would not occur to the children.

The Rabbis have explained this subject in Bereshith Rabbah: "Rabbi Pinchas said in the name of Rabbi Oshaya that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Abraham, 'Go forth and tread out a path for your children!' Thus you find that whatever is written concerning Abraham is also written concerning his children. In connection with Abraham it is written, And there was a famine in the land; in connection with Israel, it is written For these two years hath the famine been in the land."

Know that Abraham our father unintentionally committed a great sin by bringing his righteous wife to a stumbling-block of sin on account of his fear for his life. He should have trusted that G-d would save him and his wife and all his belongings for G-d surely has the power to help and to save. His leaving the Land, concerning which he had been commanded from the beginning, on account of the famine, was also a sin he committed, for in famine G-d would redeem him from death.

It was because of this deed that the exile in the land of Egypt at the hand of Pharaoh was decreed for his children. In the place of justice, there is wickedness and sin.

RADAK, WHO READS IT DIFFERENTLY

ויהי רעב בארץ — this was one of the ten trials Avram was subjected to by G'd. He successfully mastered all of them. He never second-guessed G'd, thinking that if G'd had done things differently it would have been better, especially, better for him. He could have said that G'd had said to him that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his presence, and if so how did his presence help them if the now had to face a famine? He did not question

מצרימה — generally speaking, there was always plenty of food in Egypt even if famine was prevalent in neighbouring countries because Egypt did not depend on rain from above, but relied on the waters of the river Nile which were most dependable both in quality and in quantity. Even the Torah mentions this as an advantage of Egypt in Deut. 11,10 when comparing the land of Israel to that of Egypt. Avram could not cope with the famine in the land of Canaan, due to all his herds and flocks requiring water and grazing land. Besides, by then he had a household comprising many people for whose welfare he was responsible.

לגור שם — he did not intend to settle in Egypt, only to wait out the famine there.

RAMBAN

Why did Sarai treat Hagar harshly, and was it wrong

Genesis 16:6

Ramban treats Sarai's harsh treatment of Hagar, and Abraham's acquiescence in it, as a genuine sin, for which G-d's measure-for-measure response was the birth of Yishmael, a "wild-ass of a man" destined to afflict the descendants of Abraham and Sarah throughout history. Sforno, by contrast, reads Sarai's action not as a moral failing but as a calculated, justified act meant to put Hagar in her place as a slave and to establish a pattern whereby any gentile who demeans Israel will ultimately be humbled before it, as in Isaiah's prophecy that Israel's scorners will one day prostrate themselves at her feet. AI SUMMARY

"Abram said to Sarai, "Your maid is in your hands. Deal with her as you think right." Then Sarai treated her harshly, and she ran away from her."

AND SARAI DEALT HARSHLY WITH HER, AND SHE FLED FROM BEFORE HER FACE. — Our mother did transgress by this affliction, and Abraham also by his permitting her to do so. And so, G-d heard her [Hagar's] affliction and gave her a son who would be a wild-ass of a man, to afflict the seed of Abraham and Sarah with all kinds of affliction.

SFORNO, WHO READS IT DIFFERENTLY

שפחתך בידך — for she has not been given her freedom by you who are her mistress.

ותענה שרי — Sarai's objective in maltreating Hagar was to remind her of the fact that she remained her slave. She was not to insult her mistress any more. She meant to make clear that any gentile who insults Israelites will experience similar harsh treatment. Compare Isaiah 60,14 והשתחוו על כפות רגליך כל מנאציך, "all those who reviled you shall prostrate themselves at your (Israel) feet."

RAMBAN

Why the Torah dwells on small details of the patriarchs' travels

Genesis 12:6

Ramban reads Abram's journey to Shechem as establishing the principle "ma'aseh avot siman le-vanim" (the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children): Abraham's symbolic possession of the land, his fear of the Canaanite before G-d's promise, and his building of an altar only afterward all foreshadow Israel's later conquest, beginning precisely at Shechem. Ibn Ezra, by contrast, offers a more peshat (plain-sense)-oriented, philological reading, explaining the place-names (Shechem, Moreh, elon) as later terminology and raising the straightforward historical possibility that the Canaanites had displaced an earlier people—while cautioning that the phrase "the Canaanite was then in the land" may also conceal a sod (hidden/secret meaning) he declines to state openly. Thus Ramban finds in the verse a typological key to Israel's history, while Ibn Ezra focuses on linguistic and historical clarification, only hinting at a deeper layer. AI SUMMARY

“Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.”

AND ABRAM PASSED THROUGH THE LAND. I — will tell you a principle by which you will understand all the coming portions of Scripture concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is indeed a great matter which our Rabbis mentioned briefly, saying: “Whatever has happened to the patriarchs is a sign to the children.” It is for this reason that the verses narrate at great length the account of the journeys of the patriarchs, the digging of the wells, and other events. Now someone may consider them unnecessary and of no useful purpose, but in truth they all serve as a lesson for the future: when an event happens to any one of the three patriarchs, that which is decreed to happen to his children can be understood. Concerning all decisions of “the guardians [angels],” know that when they proceed from a potential decree to a symbolic act, the decree will in any case be effected.

It is for this reason that the prophets often perform some act in conjunction with the prophecies, just as Jeremiah commanded Baruch his disciple, And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and thou shalt say: Thus shall Babylon sink. Likewise is the matter of Elisha when he put his arm on the bow [held by Joash, King of Israel]: And Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The Eternal’s arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory against Aram. And it is further stated there, And the man of G-d was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Aram till thou hadst consumed it whereas now thou shalt smite Aram but thrice. It is for this reason that the Holy One, blessed be He, caused Abraham to take possession of the Land and symbolically did to him all that was destined to happen in the future to his children. Understand this principle.

Now, with the help of G-d, I will begin to explain in detail the subject matter of the verses. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem. This is the city of Shechem for such was the name of this place, and Shechem the son of Hamor was called by the name of his city. Now Rashi wrote, “He entered it unto the place of Shechem in order to pray on behalf of Jacob’s sons when they would come grieved from the field.” This is correct.

And I add that Abraham took possession of this place at the very beginning, even before the land was given to him. It was thus hinted to him that his children would first conquer this place before they would merit it and before the guilt of the dwellers of the land was full to warrant their exile therefrom. It

is for this reason that the verse here states, And the Canaanite was then in the land. And when the Holy One, blessed be He, gave him the land by His Word, Abraham journeyed from there and pitched his tent between Beth-el and Ai for this was the place that Joshua captured first.

It is possible that Scripture mentions, And the Canaanite was then in the land, to teach us concerning the substance of this chapter, i.e., to state that Abram came into the land of Canaan, but G-d did not show him the land He had promised him. He passed to the place of Shechem while the Canaanite, that bitter and impetuous nation, was yet in the land, and Abram feared him. Therefore he did not build an altar to G-d. But when he came to the vicinity of Shechem at the oak of Moreh, G-d appeared to him and gave him the land, and as a result his fear departed from him for he was already assured in the land that I will show thee, and then he built an altar to G-d in order to worship Him openly.

Now eilon Moreh (the oak of Moreh) is in the vicinity of Shechem and is also called eilonei Moreh, as it is written over against Gilgal, beside 'eilonei Moreh.' There in Shechem, near the Jordan, are Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, where the Israelites arrived at the beginning of their entrance into the land. Eilonei Mamre, however, is a place in the land of Hebron, far from the Jordan.

Know that wherever Scripture states, eilonei Mamre, the name Mamre is on account of an Amorite by that name to whom the place belonged, just as it says, And he dwelt at the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshkol and brother of Aner, and wherever it says, eilon moreh or eilonei moreh, the places were so called on account of a man by the name of Moreh, but he was a Canaanite from the land of the Canaanites, who abide in the plains. When Scripture mentions Mamre alone, it means the name of a city, just as it is said: And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, the city of Arba, which is Hebron; Before Mamre which is Hebron. The man to whom the oaks belonged was called after the name of the city. A similar case is that of Shechem the son of Hamor, who was called Shechem after the name of the city Shechem.

In Bereshith Rabbah it is said, "In the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah, Mamre is the name of a place, and in the opinion of Rabbi Nechemyah, it is the name of a person."

IBN EZRA, WHO READS IT DIFFERENTLY

[SHECHEM.] — Shechem was the name used by Moses because it was the name by which the city was known in his time. Shechem was not yet born in Abraham's day.

TEREBINTH. — Elon (terebinth) has the same meaning as elah (terebinth). They are trees. Others say that elon means a field, as in unto El paran (Gen. 14:6).

MOREH. — Some identify him with Mamre, the confederate of Abraham. However, it is possible they are not to be so identified and Elon Moreh is the name of a place.

AND THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE LAND. — It is possible that the Canaanites seized the land of Canaan from some other tribe at that time. Should this interpretation be incorrect, then there is a secret meaning to the text. Let the one who understands it remain silent.

RAMBAN

Why leaving home was the hardest part of the test

Genesis 12:1

Ibn Ezra reads the command as given to Abram while he was still in Ur of the Chaldees, with "thy country," "thy birthplace," and "thy father's house" all referring to that original homeland, so that Abram's later move with Terah to Haran was simply a stop along the way to fulfilling that earlier directive. Ramban rejects this, marshaling proof from the verses describing Terah as the one who took Abram (making Terah, not Abram, the initiator of the Ur-to-Canaan leg of the journey) and from Eliezer's mission to "thy country… thy father's house," which is identified with Haran — showing that "country," "birthplace," and "father's house" all point to Haran, where the command of Lech Lecha was actually given, not to Ur of the Chaldees. Both agree, however, that the triple phrasing underscores how difficult it is for a person to sever ties with homeland, birthplace, and family, intensifying the test of Avraham's (Abraham's) love for G-d. AI SUMMARY

"The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you."

AND THE ETERNAL SAID UNTO ABRAHAM — 'LECH LECHA' (GET THEE OUT). This means, "For your own benefit and for your own good. And there I will make of you a great nation whilst here you will not merit the privilege of having children." Thus the language of Rashi. Now there is no need for it for such is the normal expression of the Hebrew language as in the verses: The rain is over and gone 'lo'; I will get 'li' unto the great men; Rise up, and get 'lachem' over the brook Zered; and many similar examples. Our Rabbis, however, have made a Midrash — (a homiletical interpretation) — concerning the verses [addressed to Moses] which state, And thou shalt make 'lecha' an ark of wood, and Make 'lecha' two trumpets of silver, since it was not his work and it would have been proper for these verses to be stated in the same way as that concerning the tabernacle, i.e., And thou shalt make the tabernacle.

OUT OF THY COUNTRY, AND FROM THY BIRTHPLACE. — Rashi wrote, "But had he not already departed from there together with his father and reached as far as Haran? But thus, in effect, did the Holy One, blessed be He, say to him, 'Go still further away from thy father's house.'"

And Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra explained the verse as follows: "And G-d had already said to Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country,' since this command came to him when he was still in Ur of the Chaldees, and there He commanded him to leave his country, his birthplace and his father's house, in which he was."

But this is not correct, for if so, it would follow that Abram was the central figure in the journey from his father's house by command of G-d, while Terah his father voluntarily went with him. Yet Scripture says, And Terah took Abram his son, which teaches us that Abram followed his father and that it was by his counsel that Abram went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go to the land of Canaan!

Furthermore, [according to Ibn Ezra, who says that the above command came to Abram when he was still in Ur of the Chaldees], the verse stating, And I took your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, should have stated, "And I took your father from Ur of the Chaldees and led him throughout all the land of Canaan," for it was from there that he was taken, and it was there that he was given this command.

In addition, the following difficulty may be put to Rashi and Ibn Ezra: when Abraham commanded Eliezer to get a wife for his son, he said to him, 'But thou shalt go unto my country and to my birthplace,' and he went to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor. If so, that is his "country" and his "birthplace!" And there, Scripture further says [when Eliezer recounts Abraham's charge to him], But thou shalt go unto my father's house and to my family, thus clearly indicating that there (in Mesopotamia) were his father's house and his

family which is "his kindred." This is not as Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra erred in interpreting, "Unto my country, Haran; and to my birthplace, Ur of the Chaldees."

Now since Ibn Ezra says here that in Ur of the Chaldees it was said to Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, Abraham would thus have many countries! But the essential principle you already know from what we have written in the preceding Seder, namely, that Haran is Abraham's country, and there is his birthplace, it having always been his father's country, and there Abraham was commanded to leave them.

In Bereshith Rabbah, the Rabbis similarly say "Lech lecha: one departure from Aram-naharaim, and one from Aram-nahor." The reason for mentioning out of thy country, and from thy birthplace, and from thy father's house is that it is difficult for a person to leave the country wherein he dwells, where he has his friends and companions. This is true all the more if this be his native land, and all the more if his whole family is there. Hence it became necessary to say to Abraham that he leave all for the sake of his love of the Holy One, blessed be He.

UNTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW THEE. He wandered and went about from nation to nation, from kingdom to another people, until he came to the land of Canaan, where He said to him, Unto thy seed will I give this land. Then the promise, Unto the land that I will show thee, was fulfilled, and Abraham tarried and settled there.

The verse which states, And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, means that he was not heading for Canaan for the purpose of settling there since he did not as yet know that he had been commanded concerning this land. Rather, the righteous one set his goal towards the land of Canaan for that was his intention as well as that of his father when they originally set forth from Ur of the Chaldees. This is the reason why Abraham later said, And it came to pass, when G-d caused me to wander from my father's house: he was indeed gone astray like a lost sheep.

It is possible to say that Abraham knew from the first that the land of Canaan was "the inheritance of the Eternal," destined that His special Providence be bestowed upon it, and he believed that the Divine promise, Unto the land that I will show thee, alluded to the land of Canaan either in its entirety or to one of all those lands [which together comprise Canaan]. He set his direction towards the land of Canaan generally for [he was certain that] there was the land which He would indeed show him.

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IBN EZRA, WHO READS IT DIFFERENTLY

GET THEE OUT. — God commanded Abraham while he was yet in Ur of the Chaldees to leave his country, his place of birth and also his father's house. The reason God told Abraham to leave his father's house is that the Lord knew that, although he set out for Canaan, Terah would settle in Haran. Terah did not die until sixty years after Abraham left his father's house in Haran. However, the Bible does not tell us how old he was when he left Ur of the Chaldees. After telling Abraham to go unto the land that I will show thee, God revealed his secret to him, for we read: and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan (v. 5). It is also possible that I will show thee refers to for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it (Gen. 13:15).





חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

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APTA · OHEV YISRAEL, LECH LECHA

Why Avraham's small victory proved God rules the world

Ohev Yisrael

Avraham Avinu's victory over Kedarla'omer—whose very name hints at his denial of Hashem and belief that the world is eternal and unsupervised—served to publicize Hashem's kingship over the world, demonstrating through a small band's triumph over mighty warriors that there is One who creates, oversees, and rules all. This is alluded to in "Eimek Shaveh," an acronym for "shehu amar vehayah ha'olam" (He spoke and the world came into being), marking the place where all gathered to acknowledge Hashem as King. AI SUMMARY

"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, etc., to the Valley of Shaveh, etc." Behold, it is known from the Ari z"l, based on the verse "Hashem reigns, He has donned grandeur (ge'ut)" — meaning that when it arose in His simple will to emanate and create the worlds, in order to have for Himself the title of kingship (for there is no king without a people), then, as it were, He clothed Himself in a garment of ge'ut (grandeur), numbering four hundred and ten holy threads, as explained above nearby, see there.

Now it is stated: ten measures of ga'avah (haughtiness/pride) descended to the world — nine were taken by Eilam, etc. And behold, Kedarla'omer was the king of Eilam, and he became haughty in his pride and said that the world is inherently eternal (kadmon), and he said in his heart, "There is no God, there is no judgment and no Judge," like the words of all the other apikorsim (heretics).

Therefore his name was Kedarla'omer — that is, kadur l'omer, meaning that he made himself a kadur (sphere/ball) in place of the omer, which is a tenth of an eifah, which corresponds to the holy kingship of the King Who is Himself the Holy One, blessed be He, numbering forty-five (mem-heh). And he made himself a kadur, meaning that he denied, as it were, the King of the world, and said that the world is eternal (kadmon). The Targum Yonatan ben Uziel also expounded the two words kadur l'omer in this manner, but according to his own approach.

And this was the war of Avraham Avinu (our Patriarch Avraham) against him — in order to publicize His Godliness, may His Name be blessed, and to make known and reveal that He is King over all the earth, and that He emanated them, created them, formed them, and made them, and there is none besides Him. Now when Avraham Avinu struck Kedarla'omer and the kings who were with him — who were great and mighty warriors, while he himself had but a small number of men — and nevertheless he defeated them, then it became known and revealed to all that there is One who supervises, rules, and reigns over the entire world, and guides them according to His will.

Therefore it is written, "And the king of Sodom went out to meet him," after his return, etc., "to the Valley of Shaveh." Shaveh is an acronym: "He said, and the world came into being (shehu amar vehayah ha'olam)" — meaning that they all gathered together as one and acknowledged that there is One who supervises and rules in the world, who said and created the world, and He is King over the entire world. And this is "the Valley of the King" (Eimek HaMelech). Understand this well.

Why did Avram need to leave his father's house too?

Toldot Yaakov Yosef

Avram's journey from land, birthplace, and father's house mirrors the Rambam's graduated counsel in Hilchot De'ot: one who cannot conduct himself in the straight path among his surroundings must progressively distance himself—first from his land, then his birthplace, then even his father's house—until he can serve Hashem properly. The ultimate destination, "the land that I will show you," is not a physical place but wherever the Shechinah (Divine Presence) is revealed, as in "every place where I mention My Name." AI SUMMARY

Vayomer Hashem el Avram, lech lecha me'artzecha u'mimoladetcha u'mibeit avicha el ha'aretz asher ar'eka, ve'e'escha le'goy gadol, etc. (Bereishit 12:1-2). The questions will be explained afterward. For the Rambam wrote in chapter 6 of Hilchot De'ot (halachah 1), as follows: It is the way of man to be drawn, in his views and in his deeds, after his friends and the people of his land. Therefore one must attach himself to tzaddikim (righteous ones) and distance himself from resha'im (wicked ones). And if the people of his land are evil, he should go to a land whose people are tzaddikim; and if all the lands, etc., or if he is unable to go, etc., he should dwell alone; and if they do not allow him [even this], etc., he should go to the midbar (wilderness), as it is written, "Mi yitneni va'midbar melon orechim" ("Who would give me, in the wilderness, a lodging place for wayfarers") (Yirmiyahu 9:1).

Thus it will be understood: "Lech lecha" (go for yourself) "me'artzecha" (from your land) — from the state/country; and "to dwell in the house of your birthplace" — and when you see that they do not allow you to conduct yourself in the straight path, distance yourself further, also from your birthplace, and seclude yourself in your father's house; and if you cannot serve Hashem while being with them, distance yourself further, also from your father's house, "el ha'aretz asher ar'eka" (to the land that I will show you) — "b'chol hamakom asher azkir et shemi" (in every place where I mention My Name) (Shemot 20, 21), that there should be a revelation of the Shechinah (Divine Presence), which is "the land that I will show you." And this is easily understood (v'kal lehavin).

BERDITCHEV · LECH LECHA, KEDUSHAT LEVI

Why good intentions count but evil intentions don't

Kedushat Levi

A person who sets out to bless Avraham is accounted righteous even for the intention itself, since Hashem (G-d) credits good intentions as part of the good deed, which is why the verse places the blessing before the act of blessing is even described; one who curses, by contrast, is judged only for the curse actually carried out, for evil intentions are not reckoned as deeds, as taught in Kiddushin 40. AI SUMMARY

Genesis 12,3. “I shall bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I shall curse.” At first glance it seems strange that the Torah changed the order of subject and object when speaking of anyone who would curse Avraham. Why would people who bless Avraham be given a blessing before they had actually done so? We find here an example of the principle that G’d considers good intentions as part of the carrying out of such intentions, i.e. the party carrying out a noble intention, is retroactively rewarded not only for the deed but also for the thoughts that led up to the deed. When planning something wicked, G’d does not take this into consideration even after the wicked act has been carried out. (Kidushin 40.)

Translation: Kedushat Levi translated by Rb. Eliyahu Munk

BRESLOV · ON GENESIS 12:4

What does it really mean to 'go for yourself'

Likutei Halakhot, Orach Chaim, Laws of the Sabbath 7:75

"Lech lecha" (Go for yourself) is read as Hashem yitbarach's (may He be blessed) directive to every person: to go toward one's own essence, the neshamah (soul), traveling past the obstacles of one's physicality, birth-circumstances, and family/social environment—"me'artzecha," "umimoladetcha," and "beit avicha"—toward "the land that I will show you," the source of all souls bound up with Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) and the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple). One must trust that Hashem never burdens a person with hindrances he cannot overcome, and so is always capable of pressing forward toward his neshamah's source. AI SUMMARY

This is what Hashem yitbarach (may He be blessed) said to Avraham, which alludes in this to every person in the world — "Lech lecha" (Go to/for yourself) — for it admonishes the person that he should go to himself. For the essence of the person, that which is called "I," is only the neshamah (soul), as is written in the Torah "Chotam Betoch Chotam" (A Seal Within a Seal), siman (section) 22, Likutei, chelek (part) alef. Likewise, when one speaks to a person directly and says to him "you" or "go," the essential intent is toward the neshamah, which is the essence of the person, as is known. And this is what the Torah admonishes the person.

"Lech lecha" (Go for yourself) — that you should go for yourself, to yourself, meaning to the source of your neshamah (soul), so that all your walking and journeying and all your ways in this world, in all of them you should intend to go for yourself, to yourself, meaning to the source of your neshamah.

For this is the essential core of the person, that which is spoken to, as mentioned above. And this is "me'artzecha" (from your land) — "me'artzecha" precisely. Meaning, from within your own earthliness and physicality, to whatever earthliness and physicality you have descended into, where it seems to you that it is difficult to leave from there — nevertheless you must exert yourself to go specifically from within your own land, to go for yourself, to your neshamah, etc., as mentioned above. And this is [the meaning of]:

And "from your birthplace" (umimoladetcha) — meaning, from whatever physical state you were born into, even though this too is a great hindrance, as David said (Tehillim 51), "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity," etc. — nevertheless you are compelled to go specifically "from your birthplace," to go for yourself (lecha lecha), specifically, as above.

And "from your father's house" refers to the family, neighbors, relatives, and acquaintances among whom one is raised, for from them too there are many, many hindrances to the service of Hashem (God), may He be blessed, which they obstruct in various ways — sometimes through physical means, and sometimes through their opinions and reasonings which are the opposite of truth. From all of these you must go out and go for yourself, for your soul, as above.

For you must believe that certainly the Holy One, blessed be He, does not act tyrannically (b'tronya) with His creatures, and certainly you have the strength to withstand all of this — as Admor (our teacher), may his memory be a blessing, wrote in siman 46 of Likutei Tinyana, that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not send a person hindrances that he cannot withstand, etc.

And this is "to the land that I will show you" — which is Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel), which is the generality of holiness, where the Beit HaMikdash (Holy Temple) is, where the source of all souls is. Regarding this He warns him, "lecha lecha" — "go for yourself," for your soul, as above.

And this is what Rashi explained.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

KRAKOW · MAOR VASHEMESH, LECH LECHA

Why did Avraham really journey to the Land of Israel

Maor VaShemesh

Avraham's journey to Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) was driven purely by the desire to fulfill Hashem's (the Name, i.e., God) command, with no regard for the material blessings promised to him, while Lot accompanied him only in hope of sharing in that wealth and blessing — and indeed became blessed on Avraham's account. The distinction teaches that true service of Hashem means acting solely to fulfill the mitzvah (commandment) of one's Creator, not for the sake of any reward. AI SUMMARY

Vayelech Avram ka'asher dibber eilav Hashem, vayelech ito Lot (And Avram went as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him) — one must examine closely: what novel teaching does the verse intend by specifying that Lot went with him, and what is hinted here? It seems to me, by way of elegant explanation, that Avraham Avinu, alav hashalom (peace be upon him), his essential desire was to do the will of Hashem (the Name, i.e., God). And even though the Holy One, blessed be He, had promised him material blessings, he did not set his heart on going to Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel)

for the sake of those promised blessings at all — he went only because Hashem had commanded him, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of his Creator.

But Lot — why did he run, and for what did he run? Only because he heard that the Holy One, blessed be He, had promised Avraham blessings of wealth and children and renown, his heart was lifted to go as well, perhaps he too would be blessed. And so it was — he was blessed on account of Avraham.

This is the meaning of "Vayelech Avram ka'asher dibber eilav Hashem" — that is, to fulfill the mitzvah of his Creator — but Lot went only "ito" (with him), so that he might become wealthy. This is "vayelech ito Lot" — so that he might be blessed along with him. And this is easily understood.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

GER · CHIDDUSHEI HARIM ON TORAH, LECH LECHA

Even Avraham's faith was a gift, not his own doing

Chiddushei HaRim

Avraham Avinu (our father Avraham) did not take credit for his own emunah (faith), but recognized that even this faith itself was a gift bestowed upon him by Hashem Yitbarach (the Holy One, blessed be He). From this flows a great principle in avodas Hashem (service of God): a person must realize that every attainment and every spiritual illumination he receives comes entirely from the Borei Yitbarach Shemo (the Creator, may His Name be blessed), never from himself. AI SUMMARY

He believed in Hashem, and it was accounted to him as tzedakah (righteousness) — the explanation is that Avraham Avinu (our father Avraham) considered this very emunah (faith) which he had to be a tzedakah from Hashem Yitbarach (the Holy One, blessed be He), that this too was from Him, may He be blessed. And this is a great principle in the service of Hashem Yitbarach: that everything a person attains, and all the illuminations he receives, he should know that it is all from the Borei Yitbarach Shemo (the Creator, may His Name be blessed).

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

RUZHIN · LECH LECHA, BEIT YISRAEL (RUZHIN)

Why holding back from excess brings inner peace

Beit Yisrael

A person must restrain himself from materiality and excess—not through total denial, but by channeling all his strength toward Torah, prayer, and mitzvot (commandments), thereby making peace between the yetzer tov (good inclination) and yetzer hara (evil inclination). This is the deeper meaning of "Lech lecha me'artzecha"—going forth from one's earthliness on the middle path toward the "land," the supernal chochmah (wisdom), ultimately drawing one's life-force not from material things but from the word of Hashem alone. AI SUMMARY

Lech lecha me'artzecha u'mimoladetecha el ha'aretz asher ar'eka ("Go for yourself from your land and from your birthplace to the land that I will show you," Genesis 12:1) — it is written. Concerning sur mera (turn away from evil) and aseh tov (do good), it is written, "Seek peace and pursue it" (Psalms 34:15); and it is written, "The heart of the wise man is at his right hand, and the heart of the fool at his left" (Ecclesiastes 10:2).

For from the side of the yetzer tov (good inclination), the heart is drawn to the root of holiness, to do with all one's ability only good, according to the will of Hashem. And from the side of the yetzer hara (evil inclination), the heart is drawn — rachmana litzlan (God forbid) — to all materiality.

In any event, a person should see, in every matter, to restrain himself from materiality with all his ability, as is written in the Shulchan Aruch — to do this only so that he will have strength for His service, blessed be He: to occupy himself with Torah, to pray, and to fulfill only the mitzvot (commandments) of Hashem. This is sur mera — from every material thing within him and from excess — and only aseh tov in this manner. And through this, "seek peace and pursue it" — peace can come to be between the two [inclinations].

And concerning this it is written: "Not by bread alone does man live, but by every utterance of the mouth of Hashem does man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3) — to bring forth before Hashem, through this strength, holy words, with wisdom and prayer; and this is "by every utterance of the mouth of Hashem."

And this is "Lech lecha me'artzecha" — that he should restrain himself in all things from artziyut (earthliness), and walk on the middle path, going as Hashem commanded, as above. And this is what Rashi, zal (of blessed memory), explained: "for your benefit and for your good" — for by doing this according to the will of the Borei Yitbarach (Creator, blessed be He), he can attain to the supernal chochmah (wisdom). And this is called "the land that I will show you" — the supernal chochmah.

Although there is a level even higher than this — namely, not to receive life-force from anything material at all, but to receive life-force from Hashem alone, as the verse states, "Not by bread alone... does man live, but by every utterance of the mouth of Hashem does man live" — in any case, a person should see to walk in the path described above.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

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2 chosen for the booklet

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Being numerous like dust could also mean being lowly

COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Did Abraham break from his father or complete his path?

Rabbi Sacks: Fathers and Sons

Abraham's call in Lekh Lekha can be read two ways: as a radical break from his idolatrous father Terah, as the midrash and Maimonides suggest, or as the completion of a journey Terah himself had already begun toward Canaan and away from idolatry. This ambiguity reflects a deeper pattern in Jewish thought about parenthood—even God Avinu (our Father) "diminishes" His own role, making space for His children to walk ahead and complete what He began, as seen in halachah's insistence that parents forgo excessive honour so children can grow, and in the Talmudic image of God rejoicing, "My sons have defeated Me." What feels in youth like a complete break from one's parents is often, in retrospect, the fulfillment of ideals they themselves first set in motion. AI SUMMARY

Fathers and Sons

The call to Abraham, with which Lekh Lekha begins, seems to come from nowhere:

Leave your land, your birthplace, and your father's house, and go to a land which I will show you (12:1).

Nothing has prepared us for this radical departure. We have not had a description of Abraham as we had in the case of Noah: "Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God" (6:9). Nor have we been given a series of glimpses into his childhood, as we will in the case of Moses. It is as if Abraham's call is a sudden break with all that went before. There seems to be no prelude, no context, no background.

Added to this is a sudden, unexpected verse in the last speech delivered by Moses's successor Joshua:

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the river [Euphrates], Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods (Joshua 24:2).

The implication seems to be that Abraham's father was an idolater. Hence the famous midrashic tradition that as a child, Abraham broke his father's idols. When Terah asked him who had done the damage, he replied, "The largest of the idols took a stick and broke the rest."

"Why are you deceiving me?" Terah asked, "Do idols have understanding?"

"Let your ears hear what your mouth is saying," replied the child.

On this reading, Abraham was a breaker of images, one who rebelled against his father's faith – an iconoclast who burst out of his context, his culture and all that came before.

According to Maimonides' powerful philosophical rendition, originally human beings believed in one God. Later, they began to offer sacrifices to the sun, the planets and stars, and other forces of nature, as creations or servants of the one God. Later still, they began to worship them as entities – gods – in their own right. It took Abraham, using logic alone, to realize the incoherence of polytheism:

After he was weaned, while still an infant, his mind began to reflect. Day and night, he thought and wondered, how is it possible that this celestial sphere should be continuously guiding the world, without something to guide it and cause it to revolve? For it cannot move of its own accord. He had no teacher or mentor, because he was immersed

in Ur of the Chaldees among foolish idolaters. His father and mother and the entire population worshipped idols, and he worshipped with them. He continued to speculate and reflect until he achieved the way of truth, understanding what was right through his own efforts. It was then that he knew that there is one God who guides the heavenly bodies, who created everything, and besides whom there is no other god.

According to this reading, Abraham's rejection of the past was intellectual rather than physical. He broke no idols, merely the thoughts that gave rise to them. But whether the iconoclasm was literal or metaphoric, what is common to Maimonides and the midrash is discontinuity. Abraham represents a radical break with all that preceded him.

Remarkably however, the previous chapter gives us a quite different perspective:

These are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot…Terah took Abram, his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran (11:31).

The implication of this verse seems to be that far from breaking with his father, Abraham was continuing a journey Terah had already begun.

The two passages seem contradictory. Many commentators explain this away by assuming that they are not in chronological sequence: The call to Abraham (in Genesis 12) came first. Abraham heard the divine summons, and communicated it to his father. The family set out together, but Terah stopped halfway, in Haran. The passage recording Terah's death is actually chronologically out of place, and is noted before Abraham's call, in order to guard him from the accusation that he failed to honour his father by leaving Terah in his old age.

Yet there is another obvious possibility. Abraham's spiritual insight did not come from nowhere. Terah had already made the first tentative move toward monotheism. Children complete what their parents begin.

Significantly, both the Bible and rabbinic tradition understood divine parenthood in this way: God signals the way, then challenges His children to walk on ahead, to complete the path on their own. The Midrash contrasts the description of Noah ("Noah walked with God," 6:9) and that of Abraham ("The God before whom I have walked," 24:40).

The ultimate challenge, in God's words to Abraham, is to "Walk ahead of Me and be perfect" (17:1).

In one of the most famous of all Talmudic passages, the sages disagreed with Rabbi Eliezer's opinion and outvoted him, despite the fact that his view was supported by a heavenly voice. Afterwards, Rabbi Natan encountered the prophet Elijah:

Rabbi Natan asked Elijah: "What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do in that hour?" Elijah replied: "He laughed [with joy], saying, 'My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me!'"

To be a parent in Judaism is to make space within which a child can grow. Astonishingly, this applies even when the parent is God Avinu, "our Father," Himself. In the words of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, "The Creator of the world diminished the image and stature of creation in order to leave something for man, the work of His hands, to do, in order to adorn man with the crown of creator and maker."

This idea finds expression in halakha, Jewish law. Despite the emphasis in the Torah on honouring and revering parents, Maimonides rules:

Although children are commanded to go to great lengths [in honouring parents], a father is forbidden to impose too heavy a yoke on them, or to be too exacting with them in matters relating to his honour, lest he cause them to stumble. He should forgive them and close his eyes, for a father has the right to forgo the honour due to him.

There must be a balance between what a child owes its parents – the honour due to them – and the space within which the child can grow. God, like the parent, forgoes, "diminishes" His own creation.

The story of Abraham can be read in two ways, depending on how we reconcile the end of chapter 11 with the beginning of chapter 12. One reading emphasizes discontinuity. Abraham broke with all that went before. The other emphasizes continuity. Terah, his father, had already begun to wrestle with idolatry. He had set out on the long walk to the land which would eventually become holy, but stopped halfway. Abraham completed the journey his father began.

Perhaps childhood itself has the same ambiguity. There are times, especially in adolescence, when we tell ourselves that we are breaking with our parents, charting a path that is completely new. Only in retrospect, many years later, do we realize how much we owe our parents – how, even at those moments when we felt most strongly that we were setting out on a journey uniquely our own, we were, in fact, living out the ideals and aspirations that we learned from them. And it began with God Himself, who left, and continues to leave, space for us, His children, to walk on ahead.

THE NETZIV

Being numerous like dust could also mean being lowly

Ha'amek Davar on Genesis 15:5

Avraham's children were promised not merely great numbers but also great quality: like the stars, many of them would be men of stature who bring light to the world, answering his unspoken fear that being as numerous as the dust of the earth might mean being lowly in worth. Unlike other nations, where such luminous individuals are rare exceptions compared to the masses, among Avraham's offspring such men of stature would themselves be numerous, far exceeding the usual proportion found elsewhere. AI SUMMARY

"He took him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He added, "So shall your offspring be.""

And count the stars: Not because of their abundance did He promise him here, since He had already compared the multitude of his children to the dust of the earth, but rather to add here that they will be many men of stature, who will bring light like the stars. And it was not as he had feared [upon hearing of their comparison to dust], lest they be small of worth.

If you will be able to count them: Because although there are in all the nations of the world men of stature, who bring light to their nations like stars, but they were few in number then in comparison to the amount of the masses. This is not so with the offspring of Avraham; there are great people much more than the amount of the masses, as we have written in the book of Devarim on the verse, "Not because of your being more than all the other nations."



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Me'or Einayim	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Mei HaShiloach	Living waters, the Mei HaShiloach. Trans. and edited by Betsalel Philip Edwards, Jerusalem, J. Aronson 2001 [Revised digital edition, 2021]
Noam Elimelekh	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Ohev Yisrael	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)

Ohr HaMeir	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Or HaChaim	Or Hachayim, trans. Eliyahu Munk
Peri Tzadik	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks	Maggid Books and the Orthodox Union, 2009-2019
Radak	Eliyahu Munk, HaChut Hameshulash
Ramban	Commentary on the Torah by Ramban (Nachmanides). Translated and annotated by Charles B. Chavel. New York, Shilo Pub. House, 1971-1976
Rashi	Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann, 1929-1934
Sefat Emet	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Sforno	Eliyahu Munk, HaChut Hameshulash
Shem MiShmuel	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Steinsaltz	The Steinsaltz Tanakh - English
Tiferet Shlomo	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Toldot Yaakov Yosef	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Torah Ohr	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Torah and Haftarah	Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, published by JPS
Yismach Moshe	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
Zera Kodesh	translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)
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