חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

LUBLIN · LECH LECHA, DIVREI EMET

Why did Avraham ask for a sign only later

Divrei Emet

Avraham did not request a sign when first told "to your seed I will give this land," but only later, at the Brit bein HaBetarim (Covenant between the Pieces), because that later promise hinted at techiyat hameitim (resurrection of the dead) — a reward he, in his humility, did not feel assured of meriting, even as a tzaddik (righteous person). The word "to say" signals that while the plain statement is meant for all to hear, the deeper allusion to resurrection is conveyed only by hint, prompting his request for a sign. AI SUMMARY

When we examine closely why, according to the simple reading, he did not ask for a sign earlier — when He, may He be blessed, told him "to your seed I will give this land" — but only afterward asked "By what shall I know?" — we have explained, with His help, may He be blessed, as follows. Upon closer examination: earlier it is written "to your seed," and afterward "to give to you." And at the end, at the Brit bein HaBetarim (Covenant between the Pieces), it is written "to your seed I have given," etc. And what is the meaning of "to say"?

One can say that here is a promise to him concerning techiyat hameitim (resurrection of the dead), as our Rabbis, zichronam livrachah (of blessed memory), said regarding "to give to them." And about this he asked for a sign, for he did not consider himself a tzaddik (righteous person) nor did he believe in himself regarding this.

But this is not revealed openly in the Torah, only by hint; to this it says "to say" — "to your seed I have given" — meaning, this is to reveal to everyone, whereas the essential matter is by hint.

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