בני זמננו

Modern Commentaries

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."