חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

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)