



Midrash - Parashat Lech Lecha

I. The calling of Abram

A. "I will make of you a great nation" (12:2)

1. R. Berekiah said: It is not written, ' And I will give you,' or 'And I will set you,' but, AND I WILL MAKE YOU: i.e. after I have created you as a new creation you will be fruitful and multiply. (39:10)
2. The work of Hashem always has to begin with with regeneration.
 - a) This is why a New covenant will be made with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, which includes remaking their hearts:
 - (1) "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34)
 - (2) "Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.' 18 And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. 19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from

their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 21 But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord God.” (Ez. 11:17-21)

(3) “I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. 28 You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” (Ez. 36:24-28)

b) This began with the disciples of Yeshua and extends to us if we will allow ourselves to be remade.

(1) “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

(2) Context: “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

(3) “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” (Gal. 6:14-15)

(4) The calling of Matthew Levi & the double-parable of the new wine in old wineskins and the torn patch (Matthew 9)

B. Abraham used to pray for barren women, and they were remembered [i.e.

they conceived]; and on behalf of the sick, and they were healed. R. Huna said: It was not necessary for Abraham to go to the sick person, for when the sick person merely saw him he was relieved. R. Hanina said: Even ships travelling the sea were saved for Abraham's sake. (39:11)

- C. AND BE THOU A BLESSING (בְּרַכָּה - BERAKAH): this means, be thou a *berekah* (בְּרַכָּה - pool): just as a pool purifies the unclean, so do thou bring near [to Me] those who are afar. (39:11)
1. Within Judaism, Abraham is seen as the epitome of righteousness not unlike the Messiah himself. Any who come to him do not leave unchanged. He is seen as the first “soul-winner,” who turns pagans from idolatry and to the one true God.
- D. AND ABRAM TOOK SARAI HIS WIFE, AND LOT THEIR BROTHER'S SON, AND ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS WHICH THEY HAD GATHERED, AND THE **SOULS THAT THEY HAD MADE** IN HARAN (XII, 5). R. Leazar observed in the name of R. Jose b. Zimra ... It refers, however, to the proselytes [which they had made]. (39:14)
- a) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:27-29)
1. Then let it say, 'That they had converted'; why THAT THEY HAD MADE? That is to teach you that he who brings a Gentile near [to God] is as though he created him.
 2. Now let it say, 'That he had made'; why THAT THEY HAD MADE? Said R. Hunia: Abraham converted the men and Sarah the women. (39:14)

II. Abram and Sarai in Egypt

A. The beauty of Sarai:

1. AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT, WHEN ABRAM WAS COMING INTO EGYPT, etc. (XII, 14). And where was Sarah? He had put her in a box and locked her in it. When he came to the customs-house, he [the customs officer] demanded, 'Pay the custom dues.' 'I will pay,' he

replied. 'You carry garments in that box,' said he. 'I will pay the dues on garments.' 'You are carrying silks,' he asserted. 'I will pay on silks.' 'You are carrying precious stones.' 'I will pay on precious stones.' 'It is imperative that you open it and we see what it contains,' he insisted. As soon as he opened it the land of Egypt was irradiated with her lustre [beauty]. R. 'Azariah and R. Jonathan in R. Isaac's name said: Eve's image was transmitted to the reigning beauties of each generation. Elsewhere it is written And the damsel was very fair--''ad me'od (I Kings I, 4), which means that she attained to Eve's beauty; but here in truth it is written, THE EGYPTIANS BEHELD THE WOMAN THAT SHE WAS VERY FAIR (ME'OD)-- which means, even more beautiful than Eve's image. AND THE PRINCES OF PHARAOH SAW HER, AND PRAISED HER (XII, 15). R. Johanan said: They went on outbidding each other for her (40:5)

III. Abram and Lot

A. War of the Kings

1. AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE DAYS OF AMRAPHEL KING OF SHINAR: this alludes to Babylon; ARIOCH KING OF ELLASAR: that alludes to Greece; CHEDORLAOMER KING OF ELAM: that is Media; AND TIDAL THE KING OF GOIIM [lit. 'nations']: this alludes to the wicked Power [i.e. Rome] which levies troops from all the nations of the world. R. Eleazar b. R. Abina said: When you see the Powers fighting each other, look for the coming [lit. 'feet'] of the **King Messiah**. The proof is that in the days of Abraham, because these Powers fought against each other, greatness came to Abraham. (42:4)
2. Matthew 24

B. Melchizedek

1. AND THE KING OF ZEDEK,⁶ The Lord of Zedek (Josh. X, 1). Jerusalem is called Zedek (righteousness), as it is written, Zedek (righteousness) lodged in her (Isa. I, 21). (43:5)
2. BROUGHT FORTH BREAD AND WINE. R. Samuel b. Nahman said: He instructed him in the laws of the priesthood, BREAD alluding to the shewbread, and WINE to libations. The Rabbis said: He revealed Torah

to him, as it is written, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled (Prov. IX, 5). (43:5)

IV. Abram and Sarai

A. Abram as a disciple-maker

1. AND HE BLESSED HIM, AND SAID: BLESSED BE ABRAM OF THE GOD MOST HIGH, WHO HAS ACQUIRED (KONEH) HEAVEN AND EARTH (XIV, 19). From whom then did He acquire them? ... R. Isaac said: Abraham used to entertain wayfarers, and after they had eaten he would say to them, ' Say a blessing.' ' What shall we say? ' they asked. 'Blessed be the God of the Universe of Whose bounty we have eaten,' replied he. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: 'My Name was not known among My creatures, and thou hast made it known among them: I will regard thee as though thou wast associated with Me in the creation of the world.' Hence it is written, AND HE BLESSED HIM, AND SAID: BLESSED BE ABRAM OF THE GOD MOST HIGH, WHO [sc. ABRAHAM] HAS ACQUIRED HEAVEN AND EARTH. (43:7)

B. Blessings of Abraham

1. AND HE GAVE HIM A TENTH OF ALL. R. Judah said in R. Nehorai's name: In virtue of that blessing the three great pillars of the world, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, enjoyed prosperity. In the case of Abraham it is written, And the Lord blessed Abraham in all things (ib. XXIV, 1), as a reward for, AND HE GAVE HIM A TENTH OF ALL. (43:8)

C. Merits of Abraham

1. AND THE BIRDS OF PREY CAME DOWN UPON THE CARCASSES AND ABRAM DROVE THEM AWAY (XV, 11). R. Assi said: Abraham took a flail and beat them, but they were not smitten [killed], yet even so, ABRAM DROVE THEM AWAY (WAYYASHSHEB)-by repentance. R. 'Azariah said: [God hinted to Abram]: When thy children become as carcasses [corpses] without sinews or bones, thy merit will support them. (44:16)

D. Sarai's name change

1. AND GOD SAID UNTO ABRAHAM: AS FOR SARAI THY WIFE, THOU SHALT NOT CALL HER NAME SARAI, BUT SARAH [i.e. PRINCESS]

SHALL HER NAME BE (XVII, 15). It is written, A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband (Prov. XII, 4). R. Aha said: Her husband was crowned through her, but she was not crowned through her husband. The Rabbis said: She was her husband's ruler. Usually, the husband gives orders, whereas here we read, In all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice (Gen. XXI, 12). THOU SHALT NOT CALL HER NAME SARAI, BUT SARAH SHALL HER NAME BE. R. Joshua b. Karhah said: The yod which the Lord took from Sarai soared aloft before God and protested: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Because I am the smallest of all letters, Thou hast withdrawn me from the name of that righteous woman!' Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to it: 'Hitherto thou wast in a woman's name and the last of its letters; now I will set thee in a man's name and at the beginning of its letters,' as it says, And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua (Num. XIII, 16). R. Mana said: Formerly she was a princess [Sarai] to her own people only, whereas now she is a princess [Sarah] to all mankind. (47:1)

- a) Her original name was שרי , now the numerical value of י is 10, while that of ה is 5. Thus God took the י from her name and split it up into two ה, one for her name, which became שרה (Sarah), and one to be added to Abraham's name, which was thus changed from, to אברהם . Hence Abraham was crowned (his name was changed to denote his greatness; v. XVII, 5) through Sarah. but Sarah was not crowned through him. He deduces this from the words THY WIFE, which are apparently superfluous: hence he interprets: THY WIFE-who brings thee honour.