

## Spotlight on....the Refugee

Parashat Lech Lecha opens with God's command to Avraham to leave his home and go to the Land that God will show him. Avraham immediately obeys, but encounters a number of obstacles along the way, including the war between the 4 kings and the 5 kings in Chapter 14. During the war, Avraham's nephew Lot is captured in Sedom. Avraham learns about Lot's capture in 14:13 when a palit (refugee) arrives to tell him the news. Avraham immediately springs into action and takes a team with him to go rescue Lot, which he does successfully.

One of the questions that jumps out from this story is - who is the palit?? We don't know anything about him from the text, and so rabbis over history have offered their own theories for who he might be.

The "psbat" explanation that many commentaries offer is that the palit is just someone who was involved in the war and escaped. The midrashic explanation (Niddah 61a) is that the palit is actually Og, King of Bashan. This explanation is a bit more complicated: We are first introduced to Og in BaMidbar 21:33, when Moshe has to go to war with him on the way to Israel. God comforts Moshe and tells him not to be afraid of Og. Our rabbis ask - why should Moshe be afraid of Og?? They answer that Og was actually part human and part giant, born at the time in Breishit when giants married humans. According to midrashim, Og was the only person other than Noah and his family who survived the flood (he did so by hanging onto the ark), and he then lived for many more hundreds of years! Though that sounds pretty scary already, our rabbis say that still Moshe shouldn't have been afraid of him. To explain Moshe's fear, they teach us that Og was the palit who told Avraham that Lot had been captured. Og earned merit from having told Avraham, because he saved Lot's life. And so Moshe was afraid that God would save Og in the war because of his merit from having saved Lot.

### Questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of the psbat explanation?
2. What are the pros and cons of the midrashic explanation?
3. Are there any other explanations for who the palit could be?

Bonus Question!!!! According to our sages, who was Og's brother? Email your answer to [MaharatRuth@ostns.org](mailto:MaharatRuth@ostns.org) to win ice cream!