

**Parsha Plug Parshat Lech Lecha**

<p><b>Bereshit 12:1-10, 19-20, 13:1-4</b></p>	<p><b>בראשית יב:א-י, יט"כ, יג:א-ד</b></p>
<p>1 And the Lord said to Avram, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will aggrandize your name, and [you shall] be a blessing. 3 And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you." 4 And Avram went, as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him, and Avram was seventy five years old when he left Haran. 5 And Avram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had acquired, and the souls they had acquired in Haran, and they went to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan. 6 And Avram passed through the land, until the place of Shechem, until the plain of Moreh, and the Canaanites were then in the land. 7 And the Lord appeared to Avram, and He said, "To your seed I will give this land," and there he built an altar to the Lord, Who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain, east of Beit El, and he pitched his tent; Beit El was to the west and Ai was to the east, and there he built an altar to the Lord, and he called in the name of the Lord. 9 And Avram traveled, continually traveling southward. 10 And there was a famine in the land, and Avram descended to Egypt to sojourn there because the famine was severe in the land...19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to myself for a wife? And now, here is your wife; take [her] and go." 20 And Pharaoh commanded men on his behalf, and they escorted him and his wife and all that was his. 1 And Avram came up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that was his, and Lot with him, to the south. 2 And Avram was very heavy with cattle, with silver, and with gold. 3 And he went on his journeys, from the south and until Beit El, until the place where his tent had been previously, between Beit El and between Ai. 4 To the place of the altar that he had made at first, and Avram called there in the name of the Lord.</p>	<p>א וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם, לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ. ב וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ, לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל, וְאֲבָרְכְךָ, וְאֶגְדַּלְהָ שְׁמֶךָ; וְהָיָה, בְּרַכְתָּהּ. ג וְאֲבָרְכָהּ, מִבְּרַכְיֶיךָ, וּמִקְלָלֶיךָ, אָרֶר; וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ, כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה. ד וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם, פְּאֵשֶׁר דָּבַר אֱלֹהֵי ה', וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ, לוֹט; וְאַבְרָם, בֶּן-חֲמִשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן. ה וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בֶּן-אָחִיו, וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ, וְאֶת-הַנְּפֹשׁ, אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן; וַיֵּצְאוּ, לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, וַיָּבֹאוּ, אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. ו וַיַּעֲבֵר אַבְרָם, בְּאֶרֶץ, עַד מְקוֹם שֶׁכֶם, עַד אֵלוֹן מוֹרֶה; וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי, אָז בְּאֶרֶץ. ז וַיֵּרָא ה', אֶל-אַבְרָם, וַיֹּאמֶר, לְזָרְעֶךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת; וַיְבָרֵךְ שֵׁם מִזְבֵּחַ, לֵה' הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו. ח וַיַּעֲתֵק מִשָּׁם הַהָרָה, מִקְדָּם לְבֵית-קַל--וַיֵּט אֶהְלֵה; בֵּית-קַל מִיָּם, וְהָעֵי מִקְדָּם, וַיְבָרֵךְ-שֵׁם מִזְבֵּחַ, לֵה', וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם ה'. ט וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם, הַלֹּךְ וְנֹסֵעַ הַנִּגְבָּה. י וַיְהִי רָעַב, בְּאֶרֶץ; וַיֵּרֵד אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם, לְגֹר שָׁם, כִּי-כָבֵד הָרָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ... יא לְמָה אָמַרְתָּ אֲחֹתִי הִיא, וְאָקַח אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה; וְעַתָּה, הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קָח וְלֵךְ. כ וַיִּצְוּ עָלָיו פְּרַעֲוֹ, אַנְשִׁים; וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ, וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ... יג וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ, וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ--הַנִּגְבָּה. יד וְאַבְרָם, כָּבֵד מְאֹד, בְּמִקְנֵהוּ, בְּכֶסֶף וּבַזָּהָב. טו וַיֵּלֶךְ, לְמִסְעָיו, מִנִּגְבַּב, וְעַד-בֵּית-קַל--עַד-הַמְּקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה שָׁם אֶהְלֵה בְּתַחֲלָה, בֵּין בֵּית-קַל, וּבֵין הָעֵי. יז אֶל-מְקוֹם, הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה שָׁם, בְּרֵאשִׁיטָה; וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם אַבְרָם, בְּשֵׁם ה'.</p>

<p><b>Rashi on Bereshit 12:10</b></p>	<p><b>רש"י על בראשית יב:י</b></p>
<p>A famine in the land: In that land alone, to test him, whether he would think ill of the words of the Holy One, blessed be He, Who ordered him to go to the Land of Canaan, and now He was forcing him to leave it.</p>	<p>רעב בארץ: באותה ארץ לבדה, לנסותו אם יהרהר אחר דבריו של הקב"ה שאמר לו ללכת אל ארץ כנען, ועכשיו משיאו לצאת ממנה:</p>

<b>Ibn Ezra Shitah Acheret on Bereshit 12:10</b>	<b>אבן עזרא שיטה אחרת על בראשית יב:י</b>
‘There was a famine in the land’ is mentioned for Avram would not have left the land of Canaan except because of the severity of the famine.	ויהי רעב בארץ הנזכרת, שהיא ארץ כנען הזכיר הכתוב זה כי לא יצא מארץ כנען רק בעבור חזק הרעב.

<b>Ramban on Bereshit 12:10</b>	<b>רמב"ן על בראשית יב:י</b>
<p>Avraham went down to Egypt due to hunger, to live there temporarily in order to save his life in the days of drought, and the Egyptians exploited him without cause to get his wife, and the Holy One of Blessing avenged them with great afflictions, and brought him out from there with cattle, silver and gold, and Pharaoh had commanded men to send him. And it is a hint from (Avraham), since his children went down to Egypt because of hunger to live temporarily in the land, and the Egyptians did evil to them and took their wives, as it says (<u>Exodus 1:22</u>) And every (baby) girl you shall let live, and the Holy One of Blessing avenged them with great afflictions until they were taken out (laden) with silver and gold and sheep and cattle, with many possessions, and they (Egyptians) pressed them to be gone from the land. Not a single incident that befell the father didn't befall the children...And you should know that our father Avraham committed a great sin unintentionally, in which he brought his righteous wife to stumble into transgression because of his fear of getting killed, and he should have trusted God to have saved him, his wife and all that was his, because God has power to help and to save. Also his going out from the land - of which he had been commanded at the beginning - due to famine was a transgression that he committed, because God would have saved him from dying (even) in a famine. And because of this deed it was decreed that his seed would be in exile in Egypt under the hand of Pharaoh.</p>	<p>ויהי רעב בארץ - הנה אברהם ירד למצרים מפני הרעב לגור שם להחיות נפשו בימי הבצורת, והמצרים עשקו אותו חנם לקחת את אשתו, והקב"ה נקם נקמתם בנגעים גדולים, והוציאו משם במקנה בכסף ובזהב, וגם צוה עליו פרעה אנשים לשלחם: ורמז אליו כי בניו ירדו מצרים מפני הרעב לגור שם בארץ, והמצרים ירעו להם ויקחו מהם הנשים כאשר אמר (שמות א כב) וכל הבת תחיון, והקב"ה ינקום נקמתם בנגעים גדולים עד שיוציאם בכסף וזהב וצאן ובקר מקנה כבד מאד, והחזיקו בהם לשלחם מן הארץ. לא נפל דבר מכל מאורע האב שלא יהיה בבנים...ודע כי אברהם אבינו חטא חטא גדול בשגגה שהביא אשתו הצדקת במכשול עון מפני פחדו פן יהרגוהו, והיה לו לבטוח בשם שיציל אותו ואת אשתו ואת כל אשר לו, כי יש באלקים כח לעזור ולהציל. גם יציאתו מן הארץ, שנצטווה עליה בתחילה, מפני הרעב, עון אשר חטא, כי האלקים ברעב יפדנו ממות. ועל המעשה הזה נגזר על זרעו הגלות בארץ מצרים ביד פרעה. במקום המשפט שמה הרשע והחטא.</p>

<b>Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch on Bereshit 12:10</b>
<p>The Torah never hides from us the faults, errors, and weaknesses of our great men. Just by that it gives the stamp of veracity to what it relates. But in truth, by the knowledge which is given us of their faults and weaknesses, our great men are in no way made lesser but actually greater and more instructive. If they stood before us the purest models of perfections we should attribute them as having a different nature, which has been denied to us. Were they without passion without internal struggles, their virtues would seem to us the outcome of some higher nature, hardly a merit and certainly no model that we</p>

could hope to emulate. Take, for instance Moshe's humility. Did we not know that he could also fly into a passion, his meekness and modesty would seem to us to be his inborn natural disposition, and lost to us as an example. Just his שמעו נא המורים gives his humility its true greatness, shows it to us as the result of a great work of self-control and self-ennoblement which we all should copy because we all could copy...Now, of course, it is easy for Ramban and for us who have such an abundance of experiences in our history to say, 'Avraham should have stayed in Canaan, in Egypt he should simply have left everything to the management of God...' But that God surrounds with special protection those that are fulfilling His commands was an experience that Avraham and his descendants had still to have, no Avraham preceded Avraham, and even having this experience does not preclude the duty of doing everything that is legally within one's own powers first, and having confidence in God only for that which lies beyond. Avraham could well say to himself, 'We do not rely on a miracle'.

**Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *How Perfect Were the Matriarchs and the Patriarchs? Lech Lecha 5775***

What is deeply interesting about Ramban's approach to Abraham and Sarah is his willingness to point out flaws in their behaviour. This answers a fundamental question as far as our understanding of the narratives of Genesis is concerned. How are we to judge the patriarchs when their behaviour seems problematic?...Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chajes explained that the entire tendency of midrash to make the heroes seem perfect and the villains completely evil is for educational reasons. The word *Torah* means "teaching" or "instruction," and it is difficult to teach ethics through stories whose characters are fraught with complexity and ambiguity. Yet the Torah *does* paint its characters in shades of grey. Why so? For three reasons: The first is that the moral life is not something we understand in depth all at once. As children we hear stories of heroes and villains. We learn basic distinctions: right and wrong, good and bad, permitted and forbidden. As we grow, though, we begin to realise how difficult some decisions are. Do I go to Egypt? Do I stay in Canaan? Do I show compassion to my servant's child at the risk that he may be a bad influence on my child who has been chosen by God for a sacred mission? Anyone who thinks such decisions are easy is not yet morally mature. So the best way of teaching ethics is to do so by way of stories that can be read at different levels at different times in our life. Second, not only are decisions difficult. People are also complex. No one in the Torah is portrayed as perfect. Noah, the only person in Tanakh to be called righteous, ends drunk and dishevelled...[E]ven the non-heroes have their saving graces. Esau is a loving son, and when he meets his brother Jacob after a long estrangement, they kiss, embrace and go their separate ways...This too is moral maturity, light-years removed from the dualism adopted by many religions, including some Jewish sects (like the Qumran sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls), that divides humanity into children of light and children of darkness. Lastly and most important, more than any other religious literature, the Torah makes an absolute distinction between earth and heaven, God and human beings. Because God is God, there is space for humans to be human...No religion has held a higher view of humanity than the book that tells us we are each in the image and likeness of God. Yet none has been more honest about the failings of even the greatest. God does not ask us to be perfect. He asks us, instead, to take risks in pursuit of the right and the good, and to acknowledge the mistakes we will inevitably make. In Judaism the moral life is about learning and growing, knowing that even the greatest have failings and even the worst have saving graces. It calls for humility about ourselves and generosity toward others. This unique blend of idealism and realism is morality at its most demanding and mature.

