

Adeena

Adeena Shoshana Raya bat Rivka Hana v' Naftali

Parashat Lekh-Lekha

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<https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.12.3?lang=bi>

Summary

In *Parashat Lech Lecha* God tells Avram and Sarai (who will later be renamed Avraham and Sarah to reflect their new connections with God), to leave their home and to travel to a new land. God promises that in this new land Avram will become a big nation. Avram's family will be blessed and they will be a blessing to others. Avram travels with Sarai and his nephew Lot from Haran to Canaan. There is not enough food in Canaan, which leads Avram, Sarai, and their household to move to Egypt. They eventually return to Canaan, much wealthier than when they left. Lot settles in S'dom.

God later appears **again** to Avram and promises Avram that he will have many children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. God then instructs Avram in what he needs to do to confirm his own commitment--or covenant--to stay connected with God. Sarai tells Avram that he and the servant Hagar should have a child together since she and Avram have not been able to. Hagar becomes mother of Avraham's son, Yishmael.

After this God gives Avram and Sarai the names Avraham and Sarah--reflecting the new promise--or covenant--that Avraham and Sarah make to stay connected with God.

Questions

1) In *Bereisheet*, chapter 13, in this week's *parashah* God gives Avram a mission--telling him to leave his land, his birthplace, and from his father's house to go to the place that God will show him. In two different places in this week's *parashah* God describes the blessing that God will give Avram and Avram's family if they trust in and follow God. In chapter 13, verse 16 we read:

וְשִׁמְתִי אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אִם־יֹכֵל אִישׁ
לְמִנּוֹת אֶת־עֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ גַּם־זֶרְעֶךָ יִמְנָה:

I will make your offspring like the dust of the ground--so that if a person can measure the dust of the ground, so too will they be able to measure your offspring.

How might it be a blessing to Avram that his offspring will be like the dust of the ground? <<pick 3>>

I think that this could mean that Avram will have offspring that are hard to count. They might be hard to count because there will be so many of them--like little pieces of dust. I also think it could mean that just like it is hard to see dust--because it sort of blends in with so many other things in the world--Avram's descendents will be many, but will blend in well with the rest of the world.

2) Two chapters later God talks about this blessing to Avram and his family in a different way, saying:

**וַיּוֹצֵא אֱתוֹ הַחוּצָה וַיֹּאמֶר הַבֶּט-נָא הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם-תּוּכַל לְסַפֵּר אֹתָם
וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ:**

[God] brought [Avram] outside and said, “Please look toward heavens and count the stars. Can you count them?” And [God] said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Why do you think that this time God might choose to tell Avram that his offspring will be hard to count like stars instead of repeating the blessing that they will be like dust? <<pick 3>>

It's possible that God is giving Avram a second explanation just in case he didn't understand the first one, but I think what's really happening is God is telling Avram that that his offspring will be stars. Like the stars, they will be many, and like the stars they will have permanent homes.

3) Would you rather be blessed with the first blessing--that your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, or the second one--that your offspring will be like the stars of the sky? <<pick 3>>

I would rather be blessed with the second blessing. Being blessed that my offspring would be like dust would not feel good, because it could mean that--like dust--they have to be kicked around and disturbed and moved from their places in order to exist. Also you can blow dust and then it's gone. This might be a good blessing for people who are overly confident or full of themselves, but I would rather be a source of light and someone important, like a star. I would rather be a rock STAR, than rock DUST.