



# Shaleekh



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## **Lekh L'kha "Go out" B'resheet (Genesis) 12:1 – 17:27 13 Cheshvan 5767 - Nov. 04, 2006**

By Rabbi Yaakov benYosef – [ABOUT-Torah.org](http://www.About-Torah.org)

It is difficult for us to identify with the strength of Avram's faith. He was willing to leave his family and his friends to follow HaShem. In fact, Avram had the type of faith that Yeshua mentions in Mark 10:21-22. It states " **Yeshua having looked upon him, did love him, and said to him, 'One thing thou dost lack; go away, whatever thou hast-sell, and give to the poor, and thou shall have treasure in heaven, and come, be following me, having taken up the cross. And he-gloomy at the word-went away sorrowing, for he was having many possessions.'**"

To understand fully why Avram's faith was so strong, we must look into how HaShem transformed Avram, which means "Exalted Father," into Avraham, which means "Father of a Multitude". Lekh L'kha makes it clear that Avram did not instantly possess the faith required to surrender completely to HaShem's will. Avram's faith grew as he learned how to trust HaShem. To help Avram grow in faith HaShem progressively required Avram to trust Him at deeper levels. Ultimately, Avram's training would lead him to the place where he was willing to sacrifice Yitzhak. However, before Avram was capable of trusting HaShem with Yitzhak's life he had to grow in faith. In Lekh L'kha we can see how Avram's trials tested and strengthened his faith.

The first test of Avram's faith describes the promise that the L-rd made to Avram. In B'resheet 12:1 the L-rd says "**Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show you.**" To strengthen the faith of

Avram HaShem required Avram to move from his place of comfort, into a place where trusting HaShem is essential. To accomplish, this Avram had to leave the safety of his family and friends, and dwell in lands where he could not rely on help from his family. One of the first tests Avram faced outside the protection of his family is in B'reisheet 12:12-13, which states **“it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, this is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of you”**. Avram had not yet established his own personal identity in HaShem. Avram was not willing fully to trust HaShem to protect his immediate family. As a result, Avram formulated a plan to deceive the Egyptians by telling them Sarai was his sister. Because of Avram's lack of trust HaShem intervened. As a result, Sarai was protected from adultery, by the plagues HaShem brought down on Pharaoh and his household. B'reisheet 12:17 states **“the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.”** Avram's faith was not strong enough to overcome his fear. As a result, Pharaoh and his household suffered. Clearly Avram's faith needed to grow stronger for him to fully trust HaShem.

Even after defeating the kings who captured Lot, Avram was still not fully convinced that HaShem was capable of providing for all his needs. The one thing that Avram wanted the most was an heir. Avram believed his heir was going to be a person who had not descended from his bloodline. In B'reisheet 15:4-5 we see that HaShem reassured Avram by stating, **“he shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be your heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be”** HaShem's reassurances strengthened Avram's faith and it was counted to him as righteousness, as B'reisheet 15:6 states: **“he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”** Unfortunately, Avram did not continue in righteous faith. Therefore, Avram and Sarai came to the conclusion that the HaShem needed their help in providing a heir. B'reisheet 16:3-4 states: **“Sarai Avram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Avram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Avram to be his wife. And Avram went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.”** Unfortunately, Avram and Sarai's lack of faith brought strife and contention into their household. To honor his commitment to bless Abraham's descendants HaShem even blessed the child that resulted from this union with Hagar. However, if Avram had had the faith to wait

on the HaShem, Avram's household would have been spared the strife and contention that resulted.

In the final test of faith, HaShem established an eternal covenant with Avraham and his descendants. HaShem's covenant was a reminder for Avram to remain faithful. To assure that Avram would always be faithful to the covenant, HaShem gave Avram two signs. First, Avram is commanded to walk before HaShem and become perfect as B'reisheet 17:1 states: **“when Avram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”** This changed the way that HaShem had been dealing with Avram. HaShem now commanded Avram to walk in His presence continuously. Therefore, HaShem also required a higher level of accountability from Avram. As a result, Avram's inner nature was changed. To reflect the change Avram's name was changed to Avraham.

Secondly the HaShem established a physical sign to remind future generations to remain faithful to covenant. B'reisheet 17:7-8 states **“I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”** The change in his name and the covenant of land were both physical reminders that Avram and his descendants should always be faithful to the covenant.

HaShem slowly transformed Avram into Avraham. For us, the process is similar. HaShem does not transform his people all at once. Like Avram we are tested and tried. As a result, we grow from our failures as well as our victories. Slow and steady growth prevents us from becoming too puffed up and too self-righteous. In the end our nature is transformed and we are not overcome by fear. We must remember that HaShem is refining us slowly, so that we will become the gold and silver vessels that represent His likeness, and eventually grow strong enough to walk in His presence continuously.

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