

פרשת לך לך

"ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה" - "and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing"

Avraham Avinu was told by Hashem to leave his native land and that he will be blessed in many ways.

Rashi explains that the three sections of the Pasuk refer to three different blessings specifically suited for Avraham Avinu in his travels. The first section; **ואעשך** "I will make of you a great nation", is a blessing to have children. Typically, travel diminishes the potential of having children (due to the weariness of the travelers). For this reason, Hashem reassured Avraham that he will have children. Travel also limits the capability of making money, when traveling one cannot build and establish a business. For this reason, Avraham was blessed in the second section of the Pasuk; **ואברכה**-"and I shall bless you", which was a blessing for wealth. A third thing that diminishes through travel is a person's fame. He does not stay long enough in one place to establish a name for himself. For this reason Avraham was promised by Hashem **ואגדלה שמך**-"I will make your name great".

Why would Avraham Avinu care about fame?! He was one of the most humble men in history, why was it necessary to promise him fame?! Children are obviously necessary to create a nation, as is wealth, to support his family and do charitable deeds, but why fame? Sadikim shun the spotlight! One explanation is that when Hashem performs a miracle for someone, it diminishes his merits. Avraham Avinu was not destined to have neither children nor wealth. The fact that Hashem was going to grant him both would be a source of diminishment for the merits of Avraham. Therefore Hashem promised Avraham fame. The fame of Avraham enabled him to associate with many different types of people and influence them positively. His fame would be a source to generate much Kiruv and create many merits in order to "counteract" the diminishment in merits that his wealth and children may cause.

Rashi presents an additional explanation to the three sections of the Pasuk. He explains as follows; the three sections of the Pasuk correspond to the three times the Avot are mentioned in the opening Berachah of the Amidah;

"אלקי אברהם" - this is what we say "ואעשך לגוי גדול"
"אלקי יצחק" - this is what we say "ואברכך"
"אלקי יעקב" - this is what we say "ואגדלה שמך"

One might have thought that we would end the Berachah with all of the Avot ("ברוך אתה ה' אלקי אברהם, יצחק, יעקב"), therefore the Pasuk finishes "you will be for a blessing". Meaning, only in you Avraham will we end the Berachah, as we end it "מגן אברהם".

Rashi explains that the portion of the Pasuk "ואגדלה שמך" associates with "אלקי יעקב". The words "ואגדלה שמך" "make your name great"; refers to Hashem increasing and expanding the name of Avraham, by adding the letter ה' to his name to make it from אברם to אברהם. What does the addition in Avraham's name have to do with saying "אלקי יעקב" in the Amidah? Why do the words "ואגדלה שמך" represent "אלקי יעקב"??

The Ramban explains that there is great significance in the letters of the names of the Avot and Imahot. If we add the letters in the names of the Avot and Imahot combined, it totals 26 letters. (אברהם=5 יצחק=4 יעקב=4 5+4+4=13. שרה=3 רבקה=4 רחל=3 3+4+3+3=13. 13 on each side total 26). 26 is the numerical value of Hashem's name הויה. This is why אברהם *must* be called אברהם (totaling 5 letters) and *not* אברם (only 4 letters) to keep the total number at 26. יעקב as well, must be called יעקב as opposed to ישראל (which contains one more letter), so that the total will not be more than 26. We now understand וואגדלה שמך - זה שאומרים אלקי יעקב, since *your* name will be great - meaning increased from אברם to אברהם (making 5 letters instead of 4) - that's why we must say אלקי יעקב instead of ישראל, so that we do not exceed 26. Had Hashem *not* increased the name of Avraham, we would have said "אלקי ישראל" to maintain a total of 26! This is the connection between וואגדלה שמך and אלקי יעקב .

With this concept we can explain a Pasuk in Tehilim:

"if Hashem had not been on our side, let Israel say now".

"-if not for Hashem (meaning if not for the **name** of Hashem of 26) instead of ישראל, but now that we need to keep the number at 26 we say יעקב instead of ישראל .

The letters in the Avot's names total 13. This is alluded to in Tefilah when we say; "זכר לנו היום ברית שלש עשרה"- "remember for us the covenant of the thirteen". This refers to Hashem's thirteen attributes of mercy. We can also understand it to be a reference to the Avot. We beg Hashem for mercy in merit of the thirteen - the thirteen letters which comprise the name of the Avot. Thirteen is also the numerical value of the words "אחד"-(one) and "אהבה"-(love), showing that our forefathers publicized the "oneness" of Hashem and served him out of "love" and devotion.

The question was once asked; why not mention the Imahot (Matriarchs) in the opening Berachah of the Amidah. Why do we only mention the Avot? The answer is that in fact, the mother's names are alluded to in the blessing. We say "ומביא גואל לבני" "ב-אהבה" - two times (13), referring to the two sets of 13, the Avot and Imahot, in whose merit we ask to be redeemed.

This explains the Pasuk about Yishak Avinu when he was praying for children. The Pasuk says "Yishak prayed to Hashem". Why does it say he prayed to Hashem? Who else could he be praying to?? We now understand that לה means for Hashem, meaning, for the sake of totaling 26 (the numerical value of the name of Hashem). The Pasuk is telling us that Yishak was praying for children in order to complete the number 26 that is represented in the names of the Avot.

The Pasuk continues; "לנכח אשתו"- Yishak prayed "opposite his wife". Rashi explains that Yishak and Rivkah prayed in opposite corners of the room. "זה עומד" "בזוית זו וזו עומדת בזוית זו" "this one stood in this corner and this one in that corner" Why was it necessary to pray in different corners?

The explanation is that the four letters of Hashem's name of הויה correspond to the four directions of the world, East, West, North, and South. 'י' = East, 'ה' = South, 'ו' = North, 'ה' = West. By going to the opposite corners (southwest corner and northeast

corner) they were doing a physical action to “act” out the letters of Hashem’s name which total 26, this was in order to complete the 13 letters in both the Avot and Imahot.

Rashi is also hinting to *what* they were praying for. The numerical value of the word **זו** equals 13. "זה עומד בזוית זו" this one (Yishak) stood in this corner to pray for children- in order to complete the Avot to total 13, and that one (Rivkah) stood in "זוית זו" that corner- to pray for the completion of the Imahot to total 13.

There is another explanation of the Pasuk in Tehilim mentioned above; "לולי ה'" "The name of **יעקב** is the name the Jewish people are referred to when they are on a “low” level. **יעקב** is from the word **עקב**-heel, which is the lowest part of the body. However, when we are on a high level and doing the will of Hashem, we are called by the name **ישראל**. This is derived from the words **ש-ר-א-ל** “prince of Hashem”.

When we are called by the name **יעקב** we are under the influence of the name of Hashem of **אלקים**, (Hashem’s name that represents strict judgment) since we are on a low level because we are not acting as we should be. However when we are called by the name **ישראל**, we are under the influence of Hashem’s name of kindness **הויה**, since we are on a high level as a result of us acting as we should.

Hashem’s name of kindness **הויה** “sweetens” **אלקים** (judgment). The name **אלקים** is numerically 86; this is also the numerical value of the word **לנו-86**. We now understand the Pasuk, "לולי ה' שהיה לנו" - if not for **הויה** **that sweetens** (86 that stands for **אלקים-86**) -"יאמר נא ישראל" - then we would be forced to be called by the name **ישראל** (the name associated with the kindness of Hashem). Now that we know Hashem (**הויה**) sweetens the judgment, we can be called by the name **יעקב** without worrying about the judgment it connotes.

"I will make your name great" - "ואגדלה שמך"

Rashi explains that this is referring to Avraham’s name being increased from **אברהם** to **אברהם ה'**. Hashem added the letter **ה'** to Avraham’s name. There was great significance in adding the letter **ה'** as opposed to any other letter into Avraham’s name. One reason is given by Hacham Baruch ז"ל. He says there are 243 organs that man has “control” over, five of them he does not. A person cannot control what appears before his two eyes (he can look away from something improper but the first sight is out of his control). He cannot control what he hears from his two ears, and he cannot

control what he smells through his nose. Avraham mastered and controlled 243 organs. 243 is the numerical value of אברם. Hashem had now given him control over the remaining 5 that are symbolized in the letter ה' (which is numerically 5), by adding the ה' to his name.

The letter ה' is the letter that represents fertility. The word עקרה (barren) is broken up to spell עקרה-ה' uprooted or missing ה'.

The ה' in a woman's name is conducive for her to become pregnant. This is illustrated in the names of the Imahot. The letter ה' in the names of the Imahot "enabled" them to have children. שרי was born barren, once Hashem changed her name to שרה she conceived. שרה רבקה, לאה all had the letter ה' in their names, רחל did not. As a result she had difficulty becoming pregnant. She gave her maidservant בלהה to Yaakov for a wife. The name בלהה contains two ה's. Rachel was able to "take" one of the ה's from בלהה, and utilize it for herself in order to conceive.

We also find a hint to this in what Yosef told the people of Egypt when they asked him for sustenance; "הא לכם זרע"-"here is seed for you"; Yosef told them. הא is the letter ה', and זרע represents the seed that causes pregnancy.

The letter ה' also represents פרנסה-sustenance as evidenced by Yosef's response "הא לכם זרע". ה' is for you as זרע-seed for you to sow the land for your sustenance. We also see from this Pasuk that ה' represents life. Yosef was offering them seed so that they would not perish from starvation. [A side note: the people of Egypt were starving. The word famine is רעב which is numerically 272. Yosef was telling them "הא לכם"-"here is a ה'". When you add ה' (5) to רעב (272) it totals 277- the exact numerical value of זרע. It is now understood as; רעב (272) add the ה' (5) to רעב (272) and you get זרע-277].

There is a tradition, that when the Hazan repeats the Amidah of Musaf on Shabbat and Yom Tov and chants "איה מקום כבודו" (in the כתר portion of Hazarah), the Hazan extends the ה' of איה in a melody. While he sings the ה' from איה, one should recite a prayer for one of three things, either for children, life, or sustenance. These are the three things that the ה' stands for: מזוני בני, חיי, מזוני children, life, and sustenance.

It was specifically the ה' that was added to Avraham's name for what it represented- children, life and wealth, that Avraham was in need of.

It is understood that Avraham was in need of children and wealth. As explained above, he was not originally destined for these. What is the reason Avraham needed a 'ה for life?? The Apter Rav explains that the letter 'ה in Avraham's name is what saved the Jews in later generations from the curse of Bilaam Harasha. This is what is meant when it says that the 'ה gave Avraham "life"; it protected his children from Bilaam Harasha, who tried to wipe out the Jews by cursing them.

What does the 'ה have to do with Bilaam?! How did it save us from him??

As the Jews traveled in the desert in the times of Moshe Rabeinu, they formed four groups of three tribes each group. Each of the four groups carried a flag. The names of the Avot were written on these four flags. In what format were they written? The first flag contained the first letters of the Avot's names, the 'א of Avraham, the 'י of Yishak, and the 'י of Yaakob. This results in the first flag spelling; 'א-י-י. The second flag contained the second letters in the Avot's names. This was the 'ב from Avraham, the 'צ from Yishak, and the 'ע from Yaakob. This spelled 'ב-צ-ע. The third flag contained the third letters of their names; 'ה-ח-ק. The fourth line **should have** been the fourth letter in Avraham's name- the 'ה, combined with the fourth letter of Yishak and Yaakob, and it would have spelled 'ה-ק-ב. These letters however, comprise the word "קבה"- "curse". Bilaam had seen the Jews from a distance and was hoping to contemplate on the letters of the fourth flag and use it to curse them! To his surprise, the fourth line had **skipped** the 'ה of Avraham and instead had the 'מ from אברהם, combined with the 'ק-ב from the other Avot. This switch from the 'ה to the 'מ rendered Bilaam unable to curse us. This is why Bilaam exclaimed "מה אקב לא קבה א-ל"- "how shall I curse those that Hashem has not cursed"?! He used the word קבה to show that Hashem prevented him from cursing by not forming the letters קבה on the flag.

Bilaam also exclaimed upon seeing the Jews "מה טבו אהליך יעקב"- "how good are the tents of Jacob". The word "מה" hints to the switching of the 'ה of אברהם for the 'מ of אברהם, and this prevented Bilaam from cursing the Jews. This is why it says "דע מה" "know what to answer a heretic". להשיב לאפיקורס" the word מה *should be your answer* to the claim of the Apikores who claims that Hashem does not love us. We show him how much Hashem loves us and protects us, by showing him the example of when Hashem switched the 'ה for a 'מ.

The Gematriyah of what actually was on the fourth flag (מ'-ק'-ב') is 142, which is exactly the same Gematriyah as **בלעם**, showing us that it was this fourth flag that “did him in”.

We now understand a concern that Avraham had when he found out that a ה' would be added to his name. He knew that in the future Bilaam would try and curse the Jews by using the letters formed in the flags of the Jews. He knew that now, the fourth letter of his name is a ה', and (combined with the fourth letter of the other names) it would form the word קבה-curse! For this reason Hashem reassured him by telling him "ואגדלה שמך-והיה ברכה" **even though** I will add a ה' to your name, it will be for a blessing- and *not* form a curse for you.

The next words continue "ומקללך אאר"-“those that curse you will be cursed”. The בעל הטורים says; these words have the same numerical value as the words **בלעם הבא** "Bilaam who will come to curse your children". It is **he** who will be cursed for trying to curse your children! The ה' of Avraham had the special blessing from Hashem to be used for children and wealth, and *gave life* and protection to his children from Bilaam in his attempt to curse.

"אין ויהי אלא לשון צער" "אין והיה אלא לשון שמחה"

“The word והיה connotes a term of joy” “The word ויהי connotes a term of sorrow”

Rav Shlomo Elkabetz once gave his father in law a Sefer for Mishloach Manot on Purim. It was called מנות לוי. In this Sefer he explains the famous dictate of the Gemarah "אין ויהי אלא לשון צער" and "אין והיה אלא לשון שמחה".

How does והיה show joy and ויהי show sorrow?? He explains that when a person is going through a happy time he wants it to last and extend into the future. When a person experiences difficulty he wants it to be behind him, and be “over and done” with it. The letter ו' is called ו' המהפכת it is the ו' that “turns a word around”. Meaning, a word that has a past tense becomes a future tense when a ו' is added. A word that is future tense, becomes past tense when a ו' is added.

The word היה means “was”, it is a word that is used in past tense. The ו' makes it והיה and it **will be**, it turns the word into future tense. This is like trying to take good times that you’ve already experienced in the past, and try and “pull them” into the

future. We find that **והיה** takes the past into the future and is therefore a **לשון שמחה**, by signifying the man's desire to continue the good into the future. The word **יהי** means **will be** (future tense) the **ו'** makes **ויהי**-and it **was** (in the past), this takes what lies ahead and puts it behind us. It signifies difficult times that a person wants to put behind him.

That the word **והיה** represents Berachah, is hinted in the Pasuk;
"והיה ברכה"-ואגדלה שמך- the word **והיה** has the same letters as **והיה** and hints to a term of happiness.

In this world, the name of Hashem is **יהוה**. In the future when Mashiach arrives, Hashem's name will turn into **יהיה** (the last two letters will be **יה** instead of **וה**). This is what we say in Aleinu Leshabeah "ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד" ("when Mashiach comes Hashem's name will be one"). **יהיה** shows us what that name will be in the future when Mashiach arrives.

The word **והיה** is also alluding to this time of Mashiach. It is broken up as **והיה**, showing that in the future (**והיה** is future tense), the last two letters in Hashem's name will turn from **וה** into **יה**, forming the name **יהיה**. May we merit this speedily in our days. Amen!!!