

# Kriyat HaTorah Companion 2.0

Questions Raised in Each Aliya

## Lech Lecha

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*Italics are authors comments*

Aliya 1 | 12:1-13

Examine verse 12:1.

How does Avraham know where to travel?

Rashi suggests that the anonymity of Avraham's destination builds his enthusiasm and love for his new homeland. *Perhaps this can work in the inverse: with every step Avraham took he felt more excitement and knew he was heading in the right direction.*

Ibn Ezra suggests that God had told Avraham his destination in the prior journey recorded at the end of **Chapter 11**. The words "that I will show you" mean Avraham will inherit everything he can see. The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that part of the test of Avraham was to see how enthusiastic he would be preparing for a journey with no explicit destination. He also says that this destination is the place that he will feel most comfortable, it is the place where he will experience the ultimate expression of God's presence.

Aliya 2 | 12:14-13:4

Examine verses 12:14-20.

How does the Pharaoh discover this women he's taken into his palace is married to Avram? Why does the Pharaoh ask Avram this question (12:18) when the answer was seemingly obvious?

Rashi suggests that Sarai had pronounced the curse, tipping off the Pharaoh to her loyalties. The **Sforno** suggests that when everyone but Sarai was affected by the plague, the Pharaoh understood that the plague was coming about because of how they treated Sarai. The **Sforno** also suggests that the Pharaoh had expected Avram to trust him to keep law and order. His question is essentially about Avram's disposition toward the Pharaoh's leadership.

Aliya 3 | 13:5-18

Examine verses 13:5-7.

Over what were the shepherds arguing?

Rashi suggests that the shepherds of Lot would permit their sheep to eat produce from other people's lands. The shepherds of Avram accused them of stealing, and they would respond that all this land is promised to Avram anyway. That's why the conclusion in **verse 7** delineates who owns the land currently. The **Sforno** simply suggests that the shepherds were arguing over whose flock took priority. The **Ramban** also sees this argument relating to the promise of Avram's inheritance of the land that he is currently possessing. The disagreement was whether the descendants of Lot would be included in this generational promise.

Aliya 4 | 14:1-20

Examine verse 14:1.

What does this story teach us? Why is it recorded in the Torah?

The **Sforno** suggests that this story is recorded to give us a more complex picture of Avram's skill as a leader, and most significantly, as a warrior. **Rabbeinu Bahya** suggests that these verses give greater context to the work that Avram had undertaken in representing monotheism in this world. The **Da'at Zkenim** sees the battle here as more existential between the earthly and the spiritual. The King Aryoch is synonymous with being a physical, earthly king, and the King Elassar, sound like he is related to the which is 'Assur', that which is forbidden based on religious law.

Aliya 5 | 14:21-15:6

Examine verses 15:1-6.

Why does Avram need reassurances now for his safety? What could Avram's possible concern be?

Rashi suggests that Avram felt he may be punished for killing so many people in war. God reassures him that he will not be punished but will in fact be protected. The **Da'at Zkenim** suggests that Avram was concerned that he had used all of his spiritual resources to beat these kings, and he would be left with no spiritual merit. God reassured him otherwise. The **Chizkuni** suggests that the other nations of the world would want to exact revenge on Avram, and therefore he was concerned about how he would continue to protect himself. God reassures that there was no interest in fighting Avram.

Aliya 6 | 15:7-17:6

Examine verse 16:1.

Who was Hagar? What was her background? What do we know about her?

Rashi quoting the **Bereishit Rabbah 45:1** suggests that the Pharaoh had given his daughter to Avram after he had witnessed the miracles that had happened on his behalf. The **Chizkuni** suggests that it is for the reason that Rashi suggested leads us to assume that the Pharaoh had given his daughter to Sarai as compensation for being taken captive. The name 'Hagar' can be loosely translated as reward/compensation. **Rabbeinu Bahya** suggests that the word 'Lah' shows that Hagar was a maidservant to Sarai, and had no connection to Avram. He suggests that Sarai brought Hagar with her into the marriage and therefore she had no relationship with Avram.

Aliya 7 | 17:7-27

Examine 17:7.

What is the nature of this covenant? What is God promising?

Rashi suggests that it was in this moment God becomes God of the Jewish people for all of history, always connected and intertwined. The **Sforno** suggests that this was a covenant that would ensure there would never be the need for an intermediary between God and His people, the descendants of Avram. The **Netziv** suggests that this covenant was a promise for God's continued Providence over the descendants of Avram until the actualization of all of history. The **Malbim** sees this promise as a hat tip to the roles of what is commonly known as 'zechut avot', the merit of our forefathers playing a significant role in the realization of Jewish history.

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Shabbat Shalom