

Parashat Lech Lecha

Parashat Lech Lecha is the 3rd story in the Torah. We begin to learn the origins of what became known as the Jewish people. We are introduced to Abraham and Sarah (originally known as Avram and Sarai before G-d changes their names) who are asked by God to leave their home in Haran and "go" to the land that would be shown to them. In the Torah G-d says to Avram "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you shall be a blessing..." In an act of great faith, Avram takes his wife, with Lot their nephew and a large entourage they go as G-d has instructed, and arrive in Canaan, the land that God promises to Abraham and his descendants. But, due to famine, they are soon forced to leave Canaan. They go down to Egypt and then back again to Canaan, encountering adventure and adversity all along the way. G-d sees that Avram listens and G-d enters into a formal relationship with him, promising to give him land and to make his descendants a great people. Near the end of this Torah portion, we learn that Sarah and Abraham seem to be unable to conceive a child, and so, keeping with the custom of the time, Sarah offers Hagar, her maidservant, to bear Abraham a son. Hagar does conceive, and gives birth to Ishmael, but this causes great jealousy in Sarah. As the portion closes, God instructs Abraham to circumcise himself and his son and all future male descendants as a sign of the eternal covenant.

Great faith in G-d! How many of us would leave our home and go on a journey based on promises alone? How many of us would just start again without true guarantees? I believe there are no guarantees in life, we may be comfortable in our homes, and on our present journey but experience teaches us that we need to not take that for granted because there is no guarantee that tomorrow it will be the same as today. Treasure each moment, because this day is a gift and each of today's certainties a blessing. May each one of us have the faith, as our ancestors did to know that G-d will be with us on the journey. As for Sarah offering Hagar, her maidservant, to bear Abraham a son, let us not go there in today's complex world, as we will continue to find out it was not without complications even in that time.