

תשנ"ט

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Starting Over: Life After the **מבול**

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AT THE CLOSE OF THE STORY OF THE **מבול**, God commanded **נח**, his sons, and all the animals ופרו ורבו על הארץ" (בראשית ח:יז) — to multiply and repopulate the empty world. Following this command, one would expect to hear of **נח**'s fulfillment of the commandment to engage in the rebuilding of the world. Instead, the תורה describes a cryptic episode (ט:יח-כט) involving **נח** planting a vineyard and the sequence of events that occurred immediately thereafter. Why is this story relevant here? One would expect the תורה to commence immediately with **נח**: פסוק כט "ואלה תולדות בני **נח**: פסוק כט"א ואלה תולדות בני **נח**: פסוק כט"א which appears to be the natural next step in the history of the world. What is the message of the story of the vineyard? Why is it told here? How does it fit into its context?

Before it is possible to understand the placement of the story in its context and its meaning, one must understand exactly what is taking place. What is the nature of **נח**'s action — what are his motivations? What do these motivations reveal about **נח**'s personality? Is **נח**'s action positive or negative? What is the nature of his sons' actions? Why does **נח** choose the specific responses that he does? The **מפרשים** each try to explain the story in a different way, but the various approaches can be grouped into two main categories: either they view **נח**'s actions as reprehensible or not. Notable among the commentaries are the approaches of רש"י and רמב"ן.

רמב"ן's approach remains close to the פשט (כז, כח, כט). He avoids adding any details not specifically expressed in the פסוקים. The פסוקים do not portray **נח** in a negative fashion nor express any negativity towards his actions. In fact, when reading the פסוקים, **נח** appears to be harmlessly planting in the empty world. רמב"ן sees no reason then to change that view. Why then does the פסוק preface **נח**'s actions with the word "ויחל", for **נח** was not the first person to plant grapes? The explanation is in the word "כרם". **נח** was the first to plant a whole vineyard, not just a few grapes, so they could be used to make wine. Just as one is named after or ascribed to the city that he inhab-

its, נח is called an "איש האדמה" since he lived in the land and there were no cities (BDB, page 36,a).

According to רמב"ן, then, it happened that נח, an inhabitant of the land, began a new type of agricultural development. Tragically, as a result of his making wine, נח became drunk, naked, and ultimately embarrassed by his son, teaching that even a "צדיק תמים" who merited to be the only man saved from the *מבול*, can be led to "זלזול" by wine. חם sees his father in this undignified state and instead of acting in a respectful manner, he only succeeds in further embarrassing his father by publicly humiliating him. The פסוק emphasizes that חם tells his brothers who are "בחוזן", which תרגום translates as "בשוקא", in the public market place. In contrast to חם, שם and יפת honor their father and cover him.

When נח wakes up and discovers that חם, his youngest son (והי בראשית וי), tried to publicly humiliate him, he reacts accordingly. There are two stages to נח's cursing and blessing his sons: in פסוקים כה-כו, he curses חם and blesses שם with the same circumstance — but for חם it is negative and for שם it is positive. חם is cursed that he will be a servant to the world, as opposed to שם who is blessed that he will be a servant to ה'. In כו, נח repeats his curse to חם, blesses יפת with "expanded boundaries", and שם by the presence of the שכינה in his midst. The reason why it is repeatedly stated that חם is the father of כנען is because נח curses כנען for חם's action. נח wanted to guarantee that the curse would take effect and would be passed down to the next generation. Should נח have cursed חם and not his child, if חם had no more children, the curse would not have been actualized. Since a curse only applies to the person to whom it is given and חם's son כנען was not considered part of חם because he was already born and physically separate from חם, the curse did not apply to כנען. If חם had no more children, the curse, therefore, would not have been passed to subsequent generations. Since up to this point the תורה has only spoken of כנען, it is logical to assume that he was the only child already born to חם. Thus, נח curses כנען to ensure that at least one of חם's children will bear his curse. (As a result of the curse כנען is lower in status than all his brothers. Therefore, even though he is the eldest son, he is listed last.)

In addition, the תורה wants to specifically point out that this curse of slavery was put on כנען and that he will serve the sons of שם. This is because according to the רמב"ן, this story, along with all the stories in the first part of ספר בראשית until אברהם, has one purpose: to explain the acquiring of land and losing of land by nations (רמב"ן, בראשית א:א). Therefore, part of ישראל's defense as to why they have a right to their land is the fact that כנען is subservient to them and all the acquisitions of a servant belong to his master. This helps to explain the placing of this episode right after the story

of the *מבול*. After the world was destroyed and then recreated, כנען would claim complete ownership of lands that they developed and settled. At the very outset, the *תורה* provides defense for בני ישראל, even before their identity as a nation develops, on their rights to ישראל. Right at this juncture, after the destruction of the world because of corruption, the *תורה* wants to warn against the immorality of wine and ease of succumbing to indulgences. Giving in to temptation and overindulging in wine can even lower a *צדיק*. The story of נח's vineyard experience provides that lesson.

As a result of רמב"ן's aversion to adding details to the story that are not stated in the *פסוקים*, many questions remain. Among them are: 1. Why does the story start and end with a re-listing of נח's children, even though they were listed before the *מבול*? (This can be answered by explaining that the beginning list is an introduction to the main characters of the upcoming story. The list at the end is a connection between the curses and blessings of the sons and their specific genealogies which result therefrom.) 2. Why did נח specifically plant a grapevine? 3. Why are there so many details in *פסוק כג*, regarding the actions of יפת and שם? 4. Why does שם receive two *ברכות* and חם two curses? Or, if they are identical, why are they repeated? (This may be answered by saying that the first time is to highlight the contrast between שם and חם and the second time all three are listed as a summary.) 5. Is there *ברכות* in מדה כנגד מדה? If not, why does he choose these particular *ברכות*? 6. If נח's overindulging in wine until the point of drunkenness is negative, why is there no critical reaction by ה'? 7. Why was נח only concerned that חם's punishment be carried down to the next generation, and not that the *ברכות* would be? (Perhaps the other sons of נח had no children of their own yet, so נח had no choice. This is logical to assume since the *תורה* does not speak of any.)

As opposed to רמב"ן, רש"י uses various *מדרשים* to fill in the details of the story. רש"י is struggling with the apparent contradiction that if נח was really a *צדיק* and merited being saved from the *מבול*, why are בני ישראל not descended directly from him? Additionally, why does the *תורה* not speak now of בני ישראל's beginning, when the acceptance of ה' and His reign over the world should be complete after a revelation like the *מבול*? This is particularly troublesome to רש"י since according to *רש"י* (בראשית א:א), the whole purpose of the *תורה* is only as a book of *מצות*, and therefore any other story told, including the story of creation, must have a particular reason for being included before בני receive the *מצות*. By projecting נח's actions and the whole episode in a negative light, it becomes evident why ה' would not want the Jewish nation to develop from such a character.

The *פרשה* opens with a list of characters. Since the *תורה* has not yet

mentioned the birth of כנען, the תורה tells who he is since he has a part in story. רש"י explains (בראשית רבה לו:ג) that when describing נח's actions, the תורה specifically uses the verb "ויחל" because it has a double connotation; not only can it mean "to begin" from the root י.ח.ל., but can also mean "profane" from the root ח.ל.ל. The פסוק is foreshadowing what נח's spiritual status will be as a consequence of his actions. (רש"י uses a similar translation of this verb in בראשית ד:כו) How did נח make himself profane? By planting a vineyard (second half of the פסוק) since he should have started planting a different vegetation first. As a result of the wine, נח gets drunk and becomes uncovered in his tent. (There is a "קרי וכתיב" in the פסוק: it is written "ואהלה" but read "אהלו" רש"י, quoting the תנחומא ישן, explains that the פסוק is alluding to the ten tribes who are called "אהלה" in יחזקאל. In the future, they too would go into גלות [the same root as "וייתגלו"] because of wine (עמוס ז:ו). Not only is this episode negative in itself, but it hints to negative parts of future Jewish history.)

כנען sees נח and tells his father חם, which is why חם is described as נח's father when doing this deed, and why כנען is later cursed. According to סנהדרין ע. חם not only told his brothers about their father's nakedness but he also castrated him. This added detail has a technical basis in the פסוקים: later, when נח awakens, the פסוק says "עשה לו בנו הקטן", implying that an action must have been done. Since the פסוק does not describe any action of חם's against נח, חז"ל expound, based on the history of the situation, what must have happened. As the only inhabitants of the world, חם knew that he and his brothers would divide the whole world between them as their inheritance. חם realized that his father intended to have an additional child. He drew a parallel between his life and קין and הבל. If קין and הבל, who were only two brothers, fought over the inheritance of this world, it would be harder with three brothers and even more so with a fourth. So חם took the opportunity while his father was naked and drunk in his tent to prevent him from having a fourth son.

When נח awakens, he curses specifically כנען for this action of חם. Since חם wanted to prevent נח from having a fourth son, he curses חם's fourth son (בראשית יו:). Moreover, he is the one who told חם that נח was vulnerable. (According to יפת, בראשית רבה לו:ו, יפת and שם's children also received rewards parallel to their actions towards their father. Since they performed an act of covering, שם merited the "טלית של ניצית" which covers the body and יפת merited burial, also an act of covering.) In general, there is מדה כנגד מדה מדה נח's reaction to his sons' actions. חם was afraid of the struggle over the division of this world between himself and his brothers, so נח performs this division for them. חם, as a punishment, receives the role of

the slave, שם acquires the spiritual realm, and יפת earns the physical comforts of this world.

By the תורה's relating *this* story of נח (as opposed to any other narrative), one can understand why the development of בני ישראל could not be from נח and why the world was not yet ready for בני ישראל to come into existence. Also, one can clearly see the source of many of the characteristics of the different nations and the process of their development. רש"י tries to extract from every point a symbol, trait, or blessing which the future generations acquired similar to these main prototypes.

Just as the רמב"ן's approach of not adding in details left many unanswered questions, so too רש"י's approach of filling in the details leaves a number of unanswered questions. Among these are: 1. Conceptually, how can the מדרש add in details if they are not found in the פסוקים at all? 2. נח is condemned for having planted a vineyard before other fruit, but we are not told which fruit he should have planted first. 3. If all נח's actions are worthy of condemnation, why do we hear of no critical reaction from ה'? 4. Why is slavery חם's specific punishment for castrating his father? Perhaps it can be explained that when one physically wounds someone, he believes he has control and power over them to hurt them, as opposed to a slave who is under the power and control of others. 5. How are the ברכות of שם and יפת related to their חסד to their father?

Aside from reviewing the approaches of רש"י and רמב"ן, there are other aspects of this story worth noting. Throughout ספר בראשית until this point, man — God's ultimate creation — travels through a turbulent journey of sin and repentance as he deteriorates from the ultimate state in גן עדן to a state of total moral destruction. So complete is the decline that the entire process of creation must be undone and then re-performed to correct it. Man sinned in two realms: in the realm of למקום בין and בין אדם למקום בין אדם לחברו. נח, the man chosen to survive the מבול, overcame these two specific sins. In נח, בראשית ו:ט is described as a "איש צדיק תמים". He is honest and does not commit the sin of גול. In the same פסוק, the תורה also says, "את, נח (קונקורדנציה) "את, תני"ך, האלוקים התהלך נח" נח was able to walk along with God, without trying to be a God.

When God recreates the world after the flood, he takes into account the course of events that led to the need to destroy the world. Consequently, when setting up a new world for man, he alters his creation slightly, preventing a recurrence of the same events. When comparing the פסוקים that contain God's description of, and commands to, נח and אדם, subtle differences exist:

נח ח-ט

בראשית א-ב

<p>ח:כא - "לא אוסיף לקלל עוד את האדמה בעבור האדם כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו"</p>	<p>א:כז - "ויברא אלוקים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלוקים ברא אותו"</p>
<p>ט:א - "פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ"</p>	<p>א:כח - "פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ"</p>
<p>ט:ב - "ומוראכם וחתתכם יהיה על כל חית הארץ ועל כל עוף השמים בכל אשר תרמש האדמה ובכל דגי הים בידכם נתנו"</p>	<p>א:כח - "וכבשה ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרמשת על הארץ"</p>
<p>ט:ג - "כל רמש אשר הוא חי לכם יהיה לאכלה כירק עשב נתתי לכם את כל"</p>	<p>א:כט - "הנה נתתי לכם את כל עשב זרע אשר על פני כל הארץ ואת כל העץ אשר בו פרי עץ זרע זרע לכם יהיה לאכלה"</p>
<p>ט:ה-ו - "ואך את דמכם לנפשתיכם אדרש מיד כל חיה אדרשנו ומיד האדם מיד איש אחיו אדרש את נפש האדם. שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך כי בצלם אלוקים עשה את האדם"</p>	<p>ב:טז-יז - "ויצו ה' אלוקים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל. ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות"</p>

God's description and, subsequently, view of man differs radically between man's initial creation and his reevaluation after the flood. In theory, when God originally created man, His goals for man were lofty. Man was created in His image and was expected to act as such. Everything man did should have been with the ultimate goal of following in God's footsteps and fulfilling His will. The first perversion of this goal came about with the sin of חוה and אדם. Instead of emulating God and fulfilling His will, they viewed themselves as equal to God, as the נח said, "כי ידע אלוקים כי ביום אכלכם, (ג:ה). This results in a situation where they attempted to determine for themselves what is good and bad. They distorted the original plan of the relationship between man and his Creator. Man's initial failure does not cause God to give up. He rebukes אדם and חוה and punishes them but does not change his expectations of them. Despite this, man sins again. This time, not only does sin קין towards ה', he also pioneers a realm of sin between man and fellow man. Once these tendencies had developed, man continued to sin in both realms, until reaching the point of total chaos. The last sin described before the decree of the מבול, the sin of בני אלוקים, is a composite of both types of sin (א:ד).

As a result of man's continual failure, ה' redefines man's status. After

the flood, ה' describes man again. This time, however, instead of reiterating that man was created in God's image, a statement which carries with it an implicit command and expectation, man is described as "דע מנעוריו" (ח:כא). Man has great difficulty overcoming this natural defect and ה' judges him in light of that fact.

G-d commands נח to multiply and fill the world just as He had commanded אדם. The differences are: 1. *דמו* had been commanded *בארץ* "רדו בארץ" (א:כח) to conquer the animal world and put a barrier between himself and the animal world. Man was forbidden to eat from the *דעת* עץ in order to learn to master his *תאוות*, as opposed to animals which naturally submit to their desires. *חיה* had failed in this area. She submitted to her *תאוות* and "ויתרא האישה כי טוב העץ למאכל וכי תאוה הוא לעינים...ותאכל..." (ג:ו): תאוות blurred the distinction between man and animal. (This is the significance of the snake being the means of her temptation.) Therefore, ה' removes the challenge from נח. In נח's time, the animals are already subservient to man. It is no longer up to him to create and preserve that distinction — separation is part of nature. 2. Since man had submitted to the temptation to eat the forbidden fruit, he is now permitted to eat everything, including meat. At first, man is only allowed to eat *most* of the vegetation. After the *מבול*, not only is all vegetation permitted, even animals are permitted. 3. The prohibition of eating from the *דעת* עץ served a dual purpose. It was not only a command designed to elevate man above the animal world but it also served as a test for man to see if he will try to experience being a God. Thus, by removing this prohibition, God shows His acceptance of the fact that man will naturally fail.

Before the *מבול*, God is upset because man is "ירק רע כל היום" (ו:ה); although his nature is inherently good, he distorts his character. After the *מבול*, ה' reassesses man and concludes that he is "דע מנעוריו" (ח:כא). His affinity for evil is not a result of a conscious decision, rather of an inborn weakness. Consequently, the only area in which God holds man responsible is *בין אדם* לחבירו. God agrees to lower the standards regarding sins committed against Him but still expects a basic level from man when interacting with his fellow man. He still expects the most basic level of morality: not to kill (R' Kook, "יחזון לעמחונות"). (This idea, that ה' will forgive sins committed against him more easily than sins committed against another man, can be seen in the הלכה as well. רמב"ם, in the משנה תורה says, "אין התשובה ולא יום הכיפורים מכפרין, אבל עבירות שבין אדם לחבירו...אינו נמחל לעולם. עד תשובה and יום הכיפורים. שיתן לחבירו מה שהוא חייב לו וירצהו" (הלכות תשובה ב:ט) can absolve man of sins committed between man and God, but sins between man and his fellow man are not absolved until one asks forgiveness from his fellow man.)

The “new” world created as an aftermath of the מכול is slightly altered to accommodate man’s nature. Immediately following the description of this new system, one would expect a description of how man in actuality relates to this system and repopulates the world. Indeed, the תורה begins by stating the descendants of נח who leave the ark with him. The תורה then proceeds to report their actions within the established framework and the subsequent genealogies that ensue. The story of נח planting the grapevine is actually part of this narrative.

Many parallels exist between נח, the first man in the world after the מכול, and אדם, the first man in the world.

נח	אדם
ט:כ - "איש האדמה"	ג:ז - "ויצר ה' אלוקים את האדם עפר מן האדמה"
ט:כא - "וישת מן היין וישכר"	ג:ז - "ותקח מפריו ותאכל"
ט:כא - "ויתגל בתוך אהלה" (החטא גרם שיהיה ערום)	ג:ז - "וידעו כי ערומים הם" (החטא גרם לידיעה שהם ערומים)
ט:כב - "וירא...ויגד לשני אחיו"	ג:ז - "ותרא...ותתן לאשה עמה"
ט:כד - "וידע את אשר עשה לו בנו הקטן"	ג:ז - "וידעו כי ערומים הם"
ט:כד - "ויקץ נח מיינו"	ג:ז - "ותפקחנה עיני שניהם"
ט:כג - "ויקח שם ויפת את השמלה וישמו על שכם שניהם וילכו אחורנית ויכסו את ערות אביהם"	ג:כא - "ויעש ה' אלוקים לאדם ולאשתו כתנת עור וילבישם"
ט:ז - "ויתגל בתוך אהלה"	ג:ח - "ויתחבא האדם ואשתו מפני ה' אלוקים בתוך עץ הגן"

Both אדם and נח sin by thinking they are God or wanting to be equal to Him. In attempting to do this, they sin with food. Both result in a state or an awareness of nakedness. It is clear that they both recognize the negativity of this state as they both try to hide it. Both times someone acts kindly and covers them.

attempt to emulate Him — ללכת בדרכיו. In its explanation of the פסוק in "אלא הלך אחר מדותיו של הקב"ה, states: "אחרי ה' אלוקים תלכו" (יגה), דברים "מה הוא מלביש ערומים...אף אתה הלבש ערומים..." Just as God made clothing for חם and יפת cover their father.

חם's reaction to each his sons is מדה כנגד מדה. חם is cursed by receiving the fate of being a slave to his brothers. He tried to degrade a fellow man so his consequent curse is that he should be a slave, the most degraded and humbled person over whom others have power. שם and יפת gave respect to another person and thus they are rewarded by being the masters who receive the slave's respect. Furthermore, by aspiring to achieve "ללכת בדרכיו", שם and יפת attempt to create a relationship with ה' and reach the level of בראשית ב described in השגחה פרטית. Consequently, נח rewards them with special השגחה from ה'. שם receives the blessing that God will dwell in his midst and יפת is blessed "יפת אלוקים ליפת". (There are many explanations providing clarification regarding יפת's exact blessing but the significance is that he receives it by direct השגחה from ה'.)

נענן's curse is stated twice. The first time it is written (פסוק כו), he is being cursed. Its repetition in the next פסוק is not a curse for him, rather it is a part of שם and יפת's blessing. חם's curse is placed on his son whereas שם's and יפת's blessings are placed directly on them. Recall, though, that שם and יפת have not had any children yet and therefore it would be impossible for נח to bless their children instead of them. When there is a son available, נח chooses to place it on him since the blessing or curse will not take effect until the following generations anyway, when there will be people upon which it can take effect. This idea that a blessing or curse are not actualized until later generations is found in many other places in תנ"ך. For example, ה' promises ארץ אברהם: "ילתת לך את הארץ הזאת לרשתה" (בראשית טו:), yet he does not actually receive it. The promise is only fulfilled through his children. Another example is that of אחאב. As a punishment for his actions (מלכים א' כא:כא), he and his entire household are to be completely destroyed. Once he does תשובה, however, the curse only applies to his children.

After the תורה relates how the different characters in the new world relate to it and to each other, the תורה can begin their genealogies. Only now is it apparent why each developed in his own way. Perhaps this is why the תורה made these פסוקים so ambiguous and did not explicitly state the actions of each person: it wanted to portray the permanent effect of a man's actions. The way man chooses to behave within the framework established for him will directly determine and set precedent for his offspring as well. The next פרשה, therefore, begins "ואלה תולדות בני נח שם חם יופת ויולדו להם בנים (יא) אחר המבול..."

To Choose a Nation: Attaining the Status of the אבות and אמהות

Nechama Friedman

MUCH MORE THAN A MERE COLLECTION OF STORIES, ספר בראשית serves as an introduction to the birth of the nation that would become God's "chosen." Logically, this nation had to be built from a chosen family. What qualities, then, did ה' look for when choosing this family? ספר בראשית effectively identifies these qualities through the narratives of the selection process and the lives of the אבות and אמהות. Every candidate needed to embody the qualities necessary to build the Jewish nation and must prove these to God.

It is well known that אברהם's family was chosen to begin the Jewish nation. Therefore, one would expect ספר בראשית to begin with his family and reveal the merits that deem them worthy of such honor, yet surprisingly, this is not how ספר בראשית unfolds.

The description of the chosen family begins, תרח הוליד: "ואלה תולדות תרח: את אברם את נחור ואת הרן והרן הוליד את לוט" (בראשית יא:כז). There is a fundamental question to be asked. Throughout ספר בראשית, the phrase, "ואלה תולדות" (ו) is used to introduce the primary character of the next story. For example, "ואלה תולדות נח" (ו:ט) introduces נח and the story of the destruction of the land and its inhabitants. Based on the knowledge that אברהם was chosen, why does the פסוק read "ואלה תולדות תרח" and subsequently focus on his biography, as opposed to reading "ואלה תולדות אברם" and opening immediately with פרשת אברם? Why is it crucial for the תורה to tell of תרח and his family? Isn't אברהם the initial and primary player in the following stories?

The remainder of the פרק reveals a further difficulty. The תורה recounts the marriages of אברהם and נחור in addition to תרח's intentions to travel to לוט...ואת שרי...ויצאו אתם מאור כשדים. ארץ כנען "ויקח תרח את אברם...ואת לוט...ואת שרי...ויצאו אתם מאור כשדים. ארץ כנען (יא:ל). Based on the assumption that the purpose of the narratives of ספר בראשית is to develop the characters of the chosen nation, what is the significance of these details?

To complicate matters, the מדרש תנחומא (פרשת נח ה') אדם, מהול, implying exceptional virtue. How does תרח's character fit into a category representative of these prominent figures in תנ"ך?

A further examination through חז"ל and the מפרשים reveals a controversy concerning their perception of תרח's character. Reading their opinions, however, provides little assistance in alleviating the inconsistencies surrounding תרח's personality.

There are מדרשים that depict תרח as a righteous person: "א"ר אבא ברי"ה כהנא כל מי שנכפל שמו יש לו חלק לעולם הזה ולעולם הבא אתיון ליה והכתיב אלה תולדות "דאמר ר' יודן משום ר' אבא בר כהנא ואתה, תרח תרח. יש לו בעה"ו ויש לו לעוה"ב."¹ Based on this assertion, one can conclude that תרח did in fact genuinely begin the chosen nation, solving the problem posed by "אלה תולדות תרח". Nonetheless, other מדרשים portray him as a רשע, viewing him as unworthy of being chosen.

Although it is possible to rebut some of the מדרשים that portray תרח in a negative light, the question is still left unresolved. For example, "רשעים" הולידו צדיקים יהיו נוטלין מעונות אביהם תרח עובד צלמים ואברהם בנו צדיק." (במדבר רבה י"א:א). One may respond to this מדרש by positing that תרח did תשובה, as indicated by the following statement: "ולא נאסף אבינו אברהם עד שנתבשר שעשה תרח אביו תשובה." (מדרש תנחומא יח:ח).

Furthermore, the מדרש recounts אברהם's discovery of ה' and his rejection of his father's idols. In smashing his father's idols, תרח led to present him before the king, נמרוד, who subsequently threw him into a burning furnace (ב"ר לח:ח).² Although this מדרש, along with במדבר רבה, presents תרח as an idol worshiper, he is not denigrated by the title "רשע" in view of the fact that his entire generation equally worshiped idols.

רשע"י believed that תרח was a רשע, and ventured to affirm it from the פסוקים. Significantly, there is a chronological discrepancy in the פסוקים describing תרח's death. Historically, his death occurred sixty years after אברהם's journey to כנען, ארץ כנען, although it is recorded prior to the command of "לך לך". רשע"י explains that in this manner the תורה is able to conceal אברהם's aban-

1. The מפרשים debate over how to define the פסוק (מו:מו), "אתה תבוא אל אבותך בשלום" (מו:מו). רשע"י understands that תרח himself was deserving of עולם הבא because he repented, while סנהדרין קא. maintains that he only deserved עולם הבא in אברהם's merit.
2. הרן. "וימת הרן על פני תרח אביו" (יא:כח), פסוק, according to מדרש, jumped into the furnace after his brother survived and died because his father had brought them to נמרוד. There is, however, a basic way to understand this פסוק. רשע"י begins by teaching the literal meaning of the פסוק, "רשע"י שם) מדרש (רשע"י שם) מדרש "הרן died before his father" and only after quotes the מדרש.

donment of his father and his consequent deficiency in the performance of the מצוה of ואם כבוד אב. He claims that אברהם was permitted to behave in this fashion since תרח was a רשע, thereby considered dead. Nonetheless, there are additional ways to understand the absence of chronological order in the פסוקים. In truth, according to רמב"ן, שד"ל, גור אריה, דעת מקרא and גור אריה, the פסוקים are in perfect sequence as they follow the pattern of הראשית. The תורה regularly records the death of the father before elaborating upon the next generation, and our פרשה similarly concludes תרח's narrative before describing אברהם's personal history. The גור אריה adds that on account of אברהם's initiation of a new era, the beginning of the chosen nation, the תורה wishes to specifically separate his biography from that of his ancestors.

Through this brief analysis of the conflicting מדרשים and מפרשים, we may conclude that there are various ways in which תרח's nature may be perceived, and that the evidence leans towards viewing him positively.

In an attempt, however, to reconcile תרח's character with reference to the conflicting מדרשים, the situation must be examined from a different angle. In this way, it is possible to simultaneously resolve these problems and gain insight into תרח's role in Jewish history. As stated above, the פסוק, "אלא תולדות תרח", indicates that תרח was an important link in the chain of שם's generations (according to the נחומא). He had the privilege of being the father of the גוים אב and was born מהול, as were several other esteemed leaders. Based on this information one can infer that תרח was not only a personality of importance, but also of virtue. From the specific information appearing about תרח in the פסוקים, one can infer two points that substantiate this opinion. First from, "ויקח תרח את אברם... ואת לוט... ואת שרי... ויצאו", it appears that it was originally תרח's desire to live in ארץ כנען, the chosen land.³ Secondly, an analysis of the ספר as a whole exposes תרח's descendants' underlying מדה of

3. ארץ כנען debate who instigated the trip to ארץ כנען. Most מפרשים agree that this attempted move was done after the commandment of "לך לך" was given to אברהם, by the choice of אברהם (see רמב"ן and רד"ק). Some add that אברהם went because he was commanded "לך לך", but תרח wanted to go to כנען for his own reasons (see Rav Hirsch and דעת מקרא). חוקני, נציב, חוקני, אבן עזרא, and אברבנאל take it a step further. They believe, following the order of the פסוקים, that the decision was made by both תרח and אברהם before the command "לך לך". אבן עזרא claims that תרח was fleeing from אור כשדים and King Nimrod after אברהם survived the burning furnace. The נציב maintains that it was אברהם's idea to move, but on account of his lack of ability to conduct this mission, his father תרח led the way. אברבנאל explains that תרח wanted to leave אור because of his bad luck (משנה מקום משנה מול); his son had died and his daughter-in-law was barren.

גמילת חסדים. In view of the fact that מדות are generally passed on from one generation to the next, we can infer that תרח, the latest mutual ancestor of the four characters recorded below, equally evidenced the מדה of חסד by fulfilling the מצוה of אורחים.

רבקה (פרק כד)	לبن (פרק כד)	לוט (פרק יט)	אברהם (פרק יח)
"ותמהר... ותרח עוד" (כד:כ) "ותרח הנערה" (כד:כח)	"וירץ לבן אל האישי" (כד:כט)	"ויקם לקראתם" (יט:א)	"וירץ לקראתם" (יח:ב)
-----	"ויאמר בוא ברוך ה" (כד:לא)	"וישתחו אפים ארצה" (יט:א)	"וישתחו ארצה" (יח:ב)
"ותרד כדה על ידה ותשקהו" (כד:יח)	"ויפתח הגמלים ויתן תבן ומספוא לגמלים.. ומים לרחץ רגליו" (כד:לב)	"ולינו ורחצו רגליכם" (יט:ב)	"ויקח נא מעט מים ורחצו רגליכם" (יח:ג)
"ותרח עוד את הבאר לשאב ותשאב לכל גמליו" (כד:כ)	"ויישם לפניו לאכלי" (כד:לג)	"וייעש להם משתה ומצות אפה" (יט:א)	"פת לחם וסעדו לבכם קמח..עוגות..חמאה וחלב ובן בקר" (יח:ה-ו)

The thesis of this article is that תרח was chosen to be the father of all the great nations of the world; he begat ישמעאל, לוט, נחור, עשו, and אברהם, each of whom is depicted in the פסוקים as being the father of at least one nation. This election is based not only upon תרח's decision to move to the chosen country, but also upon his quality of חסד. After it was established that all of תרח's children would begat mighty nations, ה' examined תרח's

Therefore he took אברהם (so she could have children) and לוט (so he would not die as his father did) out of the land and traveled in the direction of Canaan. The חוקי explains that תרח wanted to go ארץ כנען ולהם נתנה הארץ מורשה כדכתיב: ויהי כנען עבד למי" (ט:כ"ז) he desired to live in the land given to his ancestors. The ויציא משם לשם שמים states, "ויציא משם לשם שמים" he saw an intrinsic virtue in moving to ארץ כנען, as his son's life was endangered. After reading these מפרשים and looking at the פשט of the פסוקים, we can safely assume that ויקח "ויקח" can imply that תרח himself wanted to move to ארץ כנען and took his family along on his journey.

children to determine the deserving progenitor of the “chosen” nation.⁴ אברהם, having accompanied תר to כנען, ארץ, was granted the opportunity to initiate the chosen nation.⁵

It is commonly assumed that וירא and פרשיות לך לך depict exclusively the tests of אברהם. If this is true, though, why does the תורה speak of other characters like לוט, ישמעאל, and עבד אברהם? Given this analysis, the proposal

4. According to רד"ק י"ד:י"ח, it seems that even before the command of לך לך, people were able to perceive the significance of the land of Canaan, "מקום הדק, והשלוש". This can be proven through many גמרות and מאמרי חז"ל. The גמרא "תיר ארץ ישראל נבראת תחלה וכל העולם כולו נברא לבסוף... ארץ ישראל משקה (תענית י)" "עשרה קבים חכמה קידושין (מ"ט:). In. הקביה בעצמו וכלה עולם כולו משקה על ידי שליח" "דיש לקיש סבר ירד מבול לארץ, In. ירדו לעולם תשעה נטלה ארץ ישראל" "רק, wrote (יורה דעה רל"ד) חתם סופר The ישראל ורבי יוחנן סבר לא ירד מבול לארץ ישראל...". בקדושה עליונה שירושלים היא שער השמים מימות עולם, אפילו כשהיה היבסי יושב בירושלים והכנעני והפרזי או בארץ... מימות עולם עד סוף ימות עולם, לא נשתנה ולא ישתנה...".
5. Another possibility to answer all of our questions is that the process began with שם, as he was blessed by his father to למו יפת אלקים, נח, acquired all three “chosen” traits (which will be explained later). The מדה of חסד was displayed when he covered his naked father (בראשית ט:כ"ג). His אמונה was evident as his father refers to ה' "אלקי שם" (ט:כ"ז). As a result, שם is promised the chosen land, ארץ ישראל, as an inheritance. Following this assumption, the story of תרח takes upon significance in two ways. One, it displays a man who had a fragment of the chosen qualities but failed to bring them to full fruition. Second, as precursor to the birth of אברהם, and how his actions planted the seeds for the true chosen father to emerge. Both ways of solving the problems above can be proven through the story of עבד אברהם who was sent on a mission to seek a wife for יצחק (כ"ד) יצחק, (בראשית כ"ד) אברהם instructed his servant to travel "אל ארצי ואל מולדתי" to his homeland, the land of ארץ, implying that any girl living in the land was an option (backing up the "שם" approach, that anyone from שם has the ability to be the “parents” of the chosen nation).

When the עבד retold the story to לבן, he recounted that אברהם had commanded him to journey to לבן's HOUSE (י"ד:ל"ז) "אל בית אבי ואל משפחתי" implying that the woman that married יצחק must be from אברהם's FAMILY (backing up our "תר" theory).

The רמב"ן, רמב"ם, and רש"י are split on how to understand this discrepancy. All assume that עבד אברהם was only clarifying what אברהם really meant and that there is no discrepancy at all (see רד"ק כ"ד:ד' for clearest position), backing up our "תר" approach. שד"ל, מלבי"ם, and העמק דבר all assume that אברהם really meant what he had said and the עבד switched his words in order to make his story sound more convincing, backing up our "שם" theory. Nevertheless, when יעקב sent יעקב away, it explicitly says (כ"ח:ב') "לך פדנה ארם ביתה בתואל אבי אמך" (כ"ח:ב')

can be made that ספר בראשית describes the tests of *all* the “candidates”, all of תרח’s descendents. Every member of תרח’s family undergoes a series of tests, and only those who pass successfully qualify to become part of the designated nation.

A meticulous reading of the narratives surrounding the biographies of אברהם, לאה, רחל, יעקב, עשו, לבן, רבקה, יצחק, ישמעאל, לוט, שרה, אברהם reveals a common thread, in that each one was tested to determine whether he or she had acquired those specific qualities that would enable him or her to merit the inheritance of the chosen nation.

Each patriarch and matriarch must possess three qualities, and must pass test to prove it:

1. חסד (which was passed down in תרח’s family)
2. אמונה (absolute faith in ה')
3. Desire to dwell in ארץ ישראל

These three qualities represent the fundamental elements of God’s chosen nation. חסד represents מנוות בין אדם לחבירו and the capability to follow משפטים, moral laws. אמונה exemplifies מנוות בין אדם למקום and the willingness to follow חוקים, rulings of ה' which are inscrutable. ארץ ישראל is ה'’s certified gift to his designated people, an entity which loses its value if it is not accepted and appreciated.⁶

A. אברהם

Test #1: "לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראיך" (בראשית יב:א)

אברהם received a Divine imperative to abandon his father and travel. Compelled to *separate*⁷ and differentiate himself from everything familiar, he is told to begin a new life in which he must follow the oral instructions of

was commanded not only to go to רבקה’s homeland, but specifically to רבקה’s brother’s house. This incident may prove our thesis above, the “תרח” theory. The reason for being commanded to marry a girl who is a close relative may be because they want to keep everyone in the chosen family stemming directly from the family of תרח.

6. Every time one departs from ארץ ישראל, there is a danger that he may not return. When one loses his perspective of ארץ ישראל’s significance (that it is ה'’s gift to His chosen nation) and forgets that that is the only place where we belong, ה' retracts His gift by sending us into גלות.
7. Being separate is a vital part of being the עם קדוש. Throughout ספר בראשית בני ישראל are commanded to separate from outside influences. (This will be discussed in length in this article.) This principle is evident throughout Jewish

a God he alone believed in. אברהם's אמונה in ה' was being challenged, yet he chose to desert a life of עבודה זרה in order to engage in ה' ועבודת ה' and publicize the ה' אֱלֹהִים.

It is written about both תרח and אברהם that they left "ללכת ארצה כנען" אברהם. ויבאו ארצה כנען" (יב:ה), but אברהם alone actually arrived: (יא:לא, יב:ה), אברהם traveled to ארץ ישראל in order to establish his nation there. In his travels, he utilized every possible opportunity that he could to spread ה' שם מוכח שם ה' "ויבן שם מוכח שם ה' שם ה'...ויקרא בשם ה'" (יב:ז-ט, יג:ג-ד, יג:יח, כא:לג) ⁸.

Test #2: "ולא יכלו לשבת יחדו" (יג:ו)

Accompanying אברהם in ארץ כנען was his wife שרה and his nephew (and adopted son) לוט. As a result of שרה's barrenness, אברהם may have assumed that the promise "ואעשך לגוי גדול" would be realized through his "son", לוט. The מדרש explains, אלא מפני שראה ברוח הקדש עם לוט, אלא מפני שראה ברוח הקדש עם לוט, "מפני מה אברהם התחבר עם לוט, אלא מפני שראה ברוח הקדש עם לוט, שעתיד דוד לצאת ממנו" (וזהר ח"א:עט).

A famine befell the land of כנען, אברהם, שרה, and לוט to travel to מצרים and return with an abundance of wealth. Although אברהם and לוט remained united during the trip home, (יג:א), and subsequently settled back into their land, a disagreement erupted: "וייהי ריב בין רעי" וייהי ריב בין רעי" (יג:א), and subsequently settled back into their land, a disagreement erupted: "וייהי ריב בין רעי" וייהי ריב בין רעי" (יג:א), which led אברהם to believe that he must separate himself from לוט and from the expectation that לוט would take over for him when he died.

A war erupted between the four and five kings, which gave אברהם the opportunity to spread ה' אֱלֹהִים. His achieved success when the king of סדום pronounced, "ברוך קל עליון אשר מגן צריך בידך", recognizing that ה' had won the war for them (יד:כ). אברהם was offered a reward of riches which he refused, saying "הרמתי ידי אל ה'...ולא תאמר אני העשרתי את אברם" (יד:כב-כג), proving that he was chosen by ה' and received all of his necessities directly from Him.

Despite אברהם's spectacular rescue operation, לוט remained separated from him because he lived a life antithetical to that of אברהם's values. לוט

history. Just as our אבות would not marry anyone from Canaan, we are commanded to keep a distance from them (יח:ט), "ויגזיט, ייח:ט", forbidden from making בריתות with them, and must destroy them completely (שמות כ:יג-ליב-ל"ג, "הבדלתי אתכם מכל העמים..."). ה' "דברים ז:יב". We must remain separate because ה' (ויקרא כ:כ"ד), isolated us. The tragedies in ספר שופטים are the result of our failure to follow these instructions. On account of our assimilation with the nations of Canaan we became corrupted. As punishment, ה' allowed the foreign nations to dominate us. (See "הבאים מצרימה" in Rav Soloveitchik's book השקפה דבריה).

8. אברהם's role in this world is to spread ה' אֱלֹהִים. The chosen nation inherits this responsibility, as they must conduct themselves properly and be an אור לגוים.

sacrificed a life of עבודת ה' in order to enjoy the riches of סדום, while אברהם denied the riches of סדום in order to live a life in pursuit of ה'.

At this point, אברהם became frustrated. He kept receiving promises of a chosen nation while his wife was incapable of having children and לוט was disqualified... who was going to take over? ה' finally gave אברהם an additional piece of information, namely, that he himself would have a child. He omitted a very essential detail, however — the identity of the mother of the child. This absence of information seemed to ensure that אברהם's tests would continue to ascertain that אברהם believed that ה' promises would be fulfilled.

Test #3: "כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע" (כא:יב)

אברהם had a child at the age of 86 and named him ישמעאל. There was no doubt in אברהם's mind that this baby was the "chosen baby", as it was the only baby born to him. אברהם assumed that ישמעאל would be the heir to everything that was promised to him. אברהם raised ישמעאל for 13 years according to this conviction. He likely even told the child speculations of his future of building a unique nation. One day, ה' appeared to אברהם and notified him that he was mistaken — "לא תקרא את שמה שרי כי שרה שמה. וברכתי אתה. וגם נתתי ממנה לך בן וברכתי והיתה לגוים מלכי עמים ממנה..." (יז:טו-טז) At this point ישמעאל was perturbed and pleaded, "לו ישמעאל יחיה לפניך" (יז:יח), "No! ישמעאל should take over, I have been training ישמעאל and he is worthy of the honor!" ה' responded sharply, proclaiming that יצחק was selected. ישמעאל would be a great nation, but would not receive ישראל. Instantaneously, ה' departed without allowing אברהם to rebut: "ויכל לדבר אתו ויעל אלוקים מעל אברהם" (יז:כב). אברהם thus needed to modify his focus of the past thirteen years, and concentrate on training יצחק.

Test #4: "שמע בקלה" (כא:יג)

אברהם was evidently pained by the news that his בכור, his beloved ישמעאל, would not qualify to be his successor, but the situation deteriorated further when following יצחק's birth, שרה saw "בן הגר...מעחק" (כא:ט), deeming him worthy of expulsion.⁹ Her demand that ישמעאל be sent away meant for אברהם that he would not be the true heir.

9. גלוי עריות 2. עבודה זרה 1. "מעחק" supplies several interpretations of the word "מעחק" 3. Murder 4. Taunting יצחק with the principle of פי שנים given to the בכור and fighting with him over their inheritance. [This corresponds to שרה's response, "מעחק" defines the word "מעחק", "to play like a child" causing שרה to be jealous of ישמעאל because he was older than her son. יצחק explains that this story took place on the day that they celebrated רמבין

שמע" expected אברהם to support him, but instead was instructed, "שמע" (כא:יב) was compelled to banish his beloved son! בבלה...כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע" (כא:יב)

Test # 5: "קח את בנך את יחידך אשר אהבת את יצחק" (כב:ב)

אברהם's primary purpose was modified, as he had to now focus on raising יצחק in the proper fashion, enabling him to be the heir of the chosen nation. Later, ה' reappeared to אברהם in order to test him for the last time. This test also tested יצחק, and therefore finalized the transfer of the leadership of the new nation to יצחק.

אברהם was directed to seize his precious son and sacrifice him, a form of conduct that would make אברהם appear as a hypocrite after spending much of his life preaching against עבודה זרה and human sacrifices. Moreover, אברהם was being sent through emotional turmoil;¹⁰ he was being commanded to forfeit the son that was guaranteed to succeed him. Though it might have been expected that אברהם would respond in a skeptical and defiant manner, he instead proceeded, "וישכם אברהם בנכד ויחבש את חמריו", eager to perform the mandate of ה'. אברהם succeeded in passing the ultimate test of אמונה, just as he had successfully passed his initial test from ה'.

אברהם had demonstrated his belief in ה', his possession of the qualities of חסד and אמונה, and his understanding of the significance of ארץ ישראל by traveling there. This love of the land of Israel was exhibited again towards the end of his life, when he determined to find a wife for יצחק. Due to the importance of preserving the chosen family from the descendants of תרה, אברהם resolved to select a girl only from his family in ארם נהרים. One would have expected that אברהם would take יצחק to ארם נהרים to choose a wife for himself. Instead אברהם entrusted his servant with this responsibility, so that neither יצחק nor he would have to leave the Promised Land.

Review: אברהם = Pass

1. אמונה — Traveling to ארץ ישראל, separating from his family, לוט, ישמעאל, and עקידת יצחק.
2. חסד — מלאכים for the three הנסת אורחים.¹¹

being weaned. שרה considered יצחק to be ישמעאל's master, so therefore, because of his taunting of יצחק, he was worthy of death.

10. Each time אברהם believed that he knew his successor, ה' removed that person from the picture: לוט left for סדום. ישמעאל was banished. יצחק was going to be sacrificed as a קרבן.
11. See chart in the introduction.

3. ארץ ישראל — He traveled to ארץ ישראל¹² and refused to leave even to find a wife for יצחק.

B. לוט

A central question dominates the beginning of ספר בראשית. Who would succeed אברהם? There remain two possibilities, either אברהם himself will have a child, or לוט, who was equivalent to one, would succeed him. The מדרש writes (בן דמשק בתי זה לוט שנפשו שוקקת עליו לירשני" (מד"ר מד"ט): "13.

Every episode in אברהם's life can be related to on three planes: the facts of the experience, the perspective of אברהם, and the identity of אברהם's potential successors, לוט, ישמעאל, and יצחק. All three were tested to determine whether they deserved to become heir to the chosen nation.

At first it appeared that לוט would be the perfect continuation for אברהם. In the account of סדום's destruction, a number of linguistic parallels connect לוט's מדה of אורחים to the manner in which אברהם attended to his guests.

לוט (בראשית יט)	אברהם (בראשית יח)
"ישב בשער סדם" (י"א:א)	"ישב פתח אהלוי" (יח:א)
"וירא...ויקם לקראתם" (י"א:א)	"וירא...ויורץ לקראתם" (יח:ב)
"וישתחו אפים ארצה" (י"א:א)	"וישתחו ארצה" (יח:ב)
"רחצו רגליכם" (י"ט:ב)	"רחצו רגליכם" (יח:ד)
"סורי נא" (י"ט:ב)	"אם נא מצאתי חן" (יח:ג)
"משתה מצות אפה" (י"ט:ג)	"שלש סעים..." (יח:ו)

12. The Zohar (כ"א פ"ו) writes, "אברהם לא נכנס בביתו של הקב"ה עד שנכנס לארץ", displaying the importance of ארץ ישראל.

13. This מדרש is based on a פסוק speaking about אליעזר who is compared to לוט. The character of אליעזר, known in the פסוקים as "עבד אברהם", is revealed to us through his mission to find a wife for יצחק. Through this story, we find evidence to all three of the chosen qualities found in אליעזר. His first priority in choosing a wife is her מדה of חסד and therefore designs a scheme to test if the candidate to be the wife of יצחק has this quality. He also proved to have אמונה in ה' as during his entire speech he attempted to prove, "מה יצא הדבר", that the entire affair was a results of ה' intervention (רד"ק כ"ד:ל"ט and העמק דבר כ"ד:מ"ג). His feelings towards ארץ ישראל are unknown, except for the fact that he lived in ארץ ישראל with אברהם and only left to fulfill his mission. The lesson we learn from the story of אליעזר is that even though he may have had the qualities to be chosen, wanted to be chosen (רש"י כ"ד:ל"ט), thought he would be chosen (אמר ישמעאל, עכשיו מקריב) אבי את יצחק בנו לעולה מוקדת, ואני בנו בכורו ואני הוא היורש, אמר לו אליעזר כבר גרשך אביך כאשר, אני עבדו משרת אותו ביום ובלילה ואני היורש, ורוח הקדוש משיבה אותן לא זה יורש ולא זה

Furthermore the מדרש states, (בר"ר מא:ו) "היה קלסתר פניו דומה לו [לאברהם]" (בר"ר מא:ו), intimating genetic similarity. Similar מדרשים are written about other figures in תנ"ך that were considered to be their father's heir, such as that describing יוסף and יעקב and יצחק and אברהם.

Test: איש מעל אחיו

"וילך אתו לוט" (יב:ד): ארץ כנען on his journey with אברהם accompanied לוט. In the next פסוק, there is a contradictory statement, "ויוקח אברם...ואת לוט" (יב:ה), "ויקח אברם" "took" him. Did לוט voluntarily leave חרן or was he compelled?

The פסוקים are written equivocally in order to emphasize that this journey was also a test for לוט. By remaining with אברהם, he could earn the privilege of being the next father of the chosen nation, but with his decision to disconnect himself, the chosen nation would be transferred to someone else. The purpose of his test was to determine whether he would display absolute allegiance to those values אברהם represented by refusing to leave his side. לוט was uncertain from the beginning. He was somewhat willing to journey with אברהם but required the coaxing of "את לוט" לוט. These two פסוקים represent לוט's struggle and the two paths that he faced.

לוט accompanied אברהם down to מצרים during the famine and is praised by the מדרש for his silence as אברהם lied about שרה (נא:ו). There they both acquired much wealth and many animals and yet remained together — "ילוט עמו" (יג:א) — a situation which resulted in לוט's greatest test. The פסוק notes an argument between the shepherds of each estate: "ויהי ריב בין רעי מקנה: אברם ובין רעי מקנה לוט והכנעני והפריזי או בארץ" (יג:ז) "וילא יכלו לשבת יחדיו" (יג:ו), אברהם and לוט from the separation of לוט.

לוט did not persuade אברהם to leave ארץ. אברהם's original idea involved "הפרד נא מעלי אם השמאל ואימנה ואם הימין ואשמאילה" (יג:ט), separation to some degree for the sake of peace, however, he still wished to live near לוט in order to continue teaching and influencing him. The פסוק emphasizes אברהם's objective, "ויפרד איש מעל אחיו" (יג:יא), to separate in a friendly manner. לוט, however, became occupied with wealth and withdrew from אברהם completely — "הפרד לוט מעמו" (יג:יד) [in contrast to the previous "ילוט עמו" לוט] opting to live outside of ארץ כנען, in סדום, a land described as "כלה משקה" (יג:י).¹⁴ Having

"בא ברוך ה'" שהיה סבור בן] appeared as if he would be chosen [יורש ויליט בראשית צ"ח] רש"י "שהוא אברהם שהיה קלסתר פניו דומה לו (בר"ר ס"ז:ו) "אמר לו אברהם: בני ברוך ואתה ארור, ואין ארור מדבק, (כ"ט:ל"ט) אברהם's children were cursed as opposed to אברהם's children. This is because he didn't come from the chosen family.

¹⁴ ואנשי סדם ... עברו על מצוותיו שעה לאדם ולח. סדום describes the people living in סדום. והכל הוא חטא לה' שעוברים על מצוותיו והם שבע מצות ... ובהם ע"ז ... גול ועריות ושפיכת דמים. והכל הוא חטא לה' שעוברים על מצוותיו

actualized his decision, he automatically lost the opportunity to lead the chosen nation. As a result, אברהם was authorized to live in חברון and abandon לוט completely. לוט's final chance arose after the war of the four and five kings when he had the opportunity to reunite with אברהם. Against his better judgment, he refrained from doing so and אברהם received a further hint to answer the essential question, (טו:ד), "כי אם אשר יצא ממעריך הוא יירשד" (טו:ד). The future successor was to be an actual child of אברהם as opposed to a relative.¹⁵

Review: לוט = Fail

1. אמונה — Did not stick to אברהם.
2. חסד — סדום מלאכים came to אורחים when the הכנסת אורחים.
3. ארץ ישראל — He abandoned ארץ ישראל in order to live in סדום.

C. ישמעאל

The test of "adhering to אברהם and his ideals" continued with the next "contestant", ישמעאל's son אברהם. ישמעאל's future looked bright, as his father אברהם was convinced that he was the "chosen son": "לו ישמעאל יחיה"

"רצה לוט לחזור לעבוד ע"ז שעובדים יושבי, מדרש the style as the life style with this type of life style as the מדרש writes, ובזוים דבריו... פרוצים היו בהם עושים הרעות בפרהסיא ורגילים בהם" (בר"ד מ"א:ז) הארץ... וישא את עיניו וכו... כל הפסוק הזה לשון ערוה הוא...".

15. The story of לוט sheds light on our understanding of the chosen nation's formation and confirms our assumptions. Not only must one be born into תרח's family, but must be devoted to אברהם's convictions, לוט (דברים י"א:כ"ב) "לדבקה בו", who was expected to succeed אברהם, lost his opportunity because of his lack of adherence to אברהם's ideology. לוט's descendant, רות, seemed to pass the identical test that לוט failed. רות clung to her mother-in-law, נעמי, and refused to abandon her, "אל תפגעי בי לעובד לשוב אחריד כי אל אשר תלכי אלך ובאשר תליני אלין עמך עמי, As a result she was able to connect to the nation from which לוט was detached. It is pertinent that their biographies and the diction of פסוקים describing them are parallel.

רות
There is a famine in ארץ ישראל and לוט yielded her family and status as a result of leaving ארץ ישראל.
לוט lost her husband and both of her sons.
"ישתי כלתיה עמתי"

לוט
There is a famine in ארץ ישראל and לוט yielded his status as a result of leaving ארץ ישראל.
Both לוט's sons-in-law and his wife died (if he had 4 daughters, then 2 died)
"ולוט עמו" (עם אברהם)

There are major discrepancies in the two biographies to clarify how רות was admitted into the chosen nation and לוט was rejected.

Based on this assumption, ישמעאל raised אברהם for thirteen years to be the next father of the chosen nation. All expectations were shattered when ה' revealed to אברהם, (כא:יב), "כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע". For an unknown reason, ישמעאל was not destined to be the chosen son.

There are two stages of ישמעאל's inspection that are separated into two פרקים (פרקים טו & טז). Through this analysis, an additional requirement to be the successor is revealed. He must possess a "chosen" father and mother, giving him a positive influence from both sides.¹⁷ Therefore פרק טו relates the story of ה'ג'ר's test and פרק טז recounts ישמעאל's own test.¹⁸ Like other women in תנ"ך, שרה tried having her maidservant bear her children; she intended to adopt ישמעאל and provide the necessary education — "אולי אבנה" (טו:זב). Despite שרה's intentions, however, ה'ג'ר refused to relinquish her child, thereby causing his expulsion — "ותקל גברת בעיניה" (טו:ד).

In פרק טז, the תורה tells of those actions of ישמעאל that render him personally liable. ישמעאל's conduct as a child was corrupt: "ותרא שרה את בן ישמעאל. הגר... מצחק" (כא:ט). Once mature, he married a girl from מצרים, outside the family of אברהם (כא:כא), thus creating an absolute division between him and

רות	לוט
<p>"כי המות יפריד ביני וביניך" (א:י"ח) "נעמי ורות כלתה עמה" (א:כ"ב) "ורות דבקה בה" (א:י"ד) Instead of being drawn to riches, רות stuck to her poor mother-in-law.</p>	<p>"ויפרד איש מעל אחיו" (י"ג:א) "הפרד לוט מעמו" (י"ג:ד) ----- לוט abandoned אברהם in search of a land of riches "וירא את כל ככר הירדן כלה משקה"</p>

"ותעובי אברהם of "לך לך" in terms similar to the "לך לך" of אברהם. אבן עזרא depicts the נפש of רות in terms similar to the "לך לך" of אברהם. אבן עזרא depicts the נפש of רות in terms similar to the "לך לך" of אברהם. אבן עזרא depicts the נפש of רות in terms similar to the "לך לך" of אברהם.

רות's success in connecting to the chosen nation and bearing the future king of יהודה was on account of "רות דבקה בה". רות had the ability to devote herself to her beliefs and live a life as a Jew.

16. It appeared that he acquired the family מדה of חסד, as we see expressed when he helped his father prepare the feast for their guests, "ויתן אל הנער וימהר לעשות אתו", פסוק comments on this רש"י. "י"ח:ז").

17. This condition does not require chosen biological parents, rather that the two most influential people in the child's life are both chosen. Therefore לוט originally had a chance because his "parental figures" were שרה and אברהם.

18. See section about ה'ג'ר, for ה'ג'ר's failure to pass her test, deeming her son unworthy of the being chosen.

19. Later on during the time of נבוכדנצר, his descendants displayed their rejection of

the chosen nation.¹⁹ In addition, he made no attempt to return to his father during the early years of his life, displaying his lack of understanding of the importance of his father's legacy — "ויגדל וישב במדבר" (כא:כ) —

שמעאל, however, was a descendent of תרח, so the הגר מלאך ה' blessed with ברכות which resembled those awarded to the chosen nation, most significantly a promise of proliferation. His future does not include the promise of ארץ ישראל because that is a gift intended exclusively for the chosen nation.

שמעאל	בני ישראל
"הרבה ארבה את זרעך" (טז:י)	"וארבה אותך במאד מאד" (יז:ב)
"ולא יספר מרב" (טז:י)	"אם תוכל לספר אתם כה יהיה זרעך" (טז:ה)

הגר was further informed, (בראשית טז:יב), which עזרא interprets to mean, "Initially שמעאל will be successful against all of his enemies but later will succumb to them." This is in contradistinction to בני ישראל, who are promised in the ברת בין הבתרים that they would originally be downtrodden and afterwards elevated: "גר יהיה זרעך...ועבדום... ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול" (טז:יג-טו)

Review: שמעאל = Fail

1. אמונה — He failed to return to אברהם; married outside the family of תרח.
2. חסד — Unknown in the פסוקים²⁰
3. ארץ ישראל — His children were given an inheritance outside ארץ ישראל.

D. יצחק

Test #1: "איך השעה לעולה?" (כב:ז)

יצחק's second son, אברהם, was next in line for this tremendous opportunity. On a trip with his father, אברהם, to offer a קרבן to ה', יצחק realized that they had neglected to select an animal and immediately reminded his father of the necessity, (כב:ז): "איך השעה לעולה?" אברהם's answer, (כב:ח): "אלקים יראה לו השעה..." (כב:ח), was satisfying to יצחק who obediently continued on with his father, (כב:ח): "וילכו שניהם יחדו". The test began as he was tied up in preparation for his slaughter; the knife was raised, set to cut him, yet he remained devoted to his father. The story concludes, (כב:יט): "וילכו יחדו", the same language used in the beginning of the story. יצחק's astounding אמונה

the מדה of חסד as they cruelly gave בני ישראל salty fish and canteens of air when they were in need of food (איכה רבה ב:ד).

20. According to רש"י, he helped his father serve the guests.

in יה' is reinforced by the מדרש לו, אמר לנו, "בשעה שביקש אברהם לעקוד את יצחק בנו, אמר לו, מדרש לו, ומאמר יספסל השחיטה, אבא, בחור אני וחוששני שמא יזדעזע גופי מפחדה של סכין ואצערך, ושמא תיפסל השחיטה, ולא תעלה לך קרבן, אלא כפתני יפה יפה..." (בר"ד נו:ח).

Test #2: "וימצאו שם באר מים"

יצחק passed the test of אמונה, leaving him two additional challenges to confront: חסד and ישראל. The פסוקים depict only a few details concerning his life, but these are enough to shed light on his personality. יצחק's wealth provoked jealousy among the פלישתים and forced מלך פלישתים to demand that יצחק vacate: "כויזי) and seek out a new location which, despite the famine, contained water. A segment of גר's inhabitants pursued יצחק, claiming every property that he attempted to settle, causing יצחק to continuously relocate to new abodes.²¹ יצחק displayed his מדה of חסד and his behavior לחבירו. According to the logic of the non-Jewish world in which "first come, first served" is a generally accepted principle, יצחק's claim to the well because of his arrival prior to the advent of the פלישתים, should prevail. Instead, יצחק avoided dispute and relocated in search of another well.

Review: יצחק = Pass

1. אמונה — Remained with אברהם even as he was being tied down to be slaughtered.
2. חסד — He avoided any fights with the פלישתים and was compassionate towards הגר.
3. ארץ ישראל — He lived there throughout his life.²²

E. עשו

The tests continue with the two sons of יצחק and רבקה, both potentially endowed with equal opportunities to inherit the chosen nation. רבקה was enlightened with יה's perspective that יעקב was the chosen boy: "שני גוים: רבקה causing בבטנך ושני לאמים ממעיך יפרדו ולאם מלאם יאמץ ורב יעבד עעיר" (כה:כג) רבקה was unaware of this and there-

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21. Relocating in search of water during a famine was extremely difficult, וייהי רעב, יצחק was prepared to uproot himself and search for water three times in order to remain separate! בארץ" (כ"ז:א)
 22. יצחק did not leave ישראל ארץ during his lifetime. When a famine broke out, he anticipated a trip to מערים but was stopped in גר by יה, "אל תרד מערימה שכן בארץ, יה' by גר. The מדרש explains the reason, "אתה עולה תמימה אם יצאה חוצה לארץ נפסלת" (בר"ד ס"ד:ג).

fore viewed his two sons according to his own preference: "ויאהב יצחק את עשו" (כח:כה). From the fact that יצחק loved עשו, one can infer that עשו possessed certain virtuous qualities deserving of his father's attention.

It is naturally assumed that the negative descriptions of עשו provided by the מפרשים, such as (מדרש תנחומא תולדות ח) מפרשים, are definitive, however, there are מדרשים which paint עשו in a different light. "לא היה אדם בעולם: כבוד אב ואם מצוה" עשו knew how to properly observe the מצוה of כבוד אב ואם (זוהר ח"א קמו): "השוקיר לאביו כמו שהיה עשו מוקיר לאביו, וזה גרם לו שישלוט בעולם הזה" (זוהר ח"א קמו): The מדרש compares עשו's service of his father to the service of a servant towards a king [פס"ר כד:נה] and elsewhere suggests that יעקב was terrified of encountering his brother on account of his excellence in this area — "שהוא עסק כל הזמן בכבוד" — "כי ירא אנכי — שהוא עסק כל הזמן בכבוד" — "אב" (תרגום יונתן לבי:ב) "היה קלסתר פניו דומה: עשו" מדרש writes about עשו, "לאביו" (מדרש שו"ט יח:לב) (as is similarly written about יצחק and אברהם). Thus, it is understandable that עשו loved יצחק.

The מפרשים who take a derogatory view of עשו argue that the פסוק "כי, פסוק" who take a derogatory view of עשו argue that the פסוק "כי, פסוק" should not be interpreted positively but rather as a negative attribute. רמב"ן understands that he would frequently place food in his father's mouth, deceiving his father into believing that he was virtuous. Moreover, רש"י explains that עשו would mislead his father by questioning him about כשרות in order for his father to believe he had a deep interest in הלכה: "כסבור: הלכה" עשו's love of עשו can therefore be understood in one of two ways. Either יצחק loved עשו because he was deceived about עשו's real nature (רמב"ן and רש"י), or יעקב loved his righteous son יעקב and only loved עשו at those moments when he put food in his mouth. (ספורנו, רד"ק, and חזקוני).

Following this brief analysis of the מדרשים and מפרשים עשו, עשו's character remains somewhat bewildering. Examining the פסוקים and the events that transpired may be further enlightening.

Test: "ויבן עשו את הבכורה"

It is interesting to note that the story of יעקב and עשו is strikingly parallel to the story of קין and הבל.

קין and הבל	יעקב and עשו
איש אדמה = קין	איש שדה = עשו
רעה צאן = הבל (a more passive job)	איש תם ישב אהלים = יעקב
הבל copied his brother's idea and his קין was accepted as opposed to קין's	יעקב stole his brother's ברכה

קין wished to kill הבל [and succeeded]	יעקב wished to kill עשו
קין lost the inheritance (שת became the chosen brother)	עשו lost the inheritance (of the chosen nation)
הבל, the younger brother, died	יעקב was forced to run away

If our operative thesis is applied to this story as well, עשו can be perceived differently. עשו's challenge was to sustain his "older brother status" — recognize its value, and guard it at all costs. There are three stories in which עשו's failure is evident.

עשו, exchanging his birthright for food, acted rashly without considering long term consequences, as the רמב"ן writes, חפצם ויעשו וישתו ויאכלו וישתו ויעשו חפצם. בעתם, ולא יחושו ליום מחר" — This attitude of instant gratification was facilitated by his occupation, hunting.²³ Since עשו did not understand the essence of the בכורה, he married a חתי woman, outside of the family of תרח — ותהיין מרת "רוח ליצחק ולרבקה" (כולה) (כה:יג). He thus proved his lack of understanding of his family's importance and his opportunity and forfeited his rights to everything.²⁴

Only one other story about עשו's childhood is recorded, in which יצחק transfers ברכת אברהם to one of his sons.

יבג: ברכה s' אברהם	כז: ברכה s' יעקב
"ונברכה מברכיך ומקללך אאר"	"וארריך ארור ומברכיך ברוך"
"ונברכו בך כל משפחות האדמה"	"יעבדוך עמים וישתחוו לך לאמים היה גביר לאחיד וישתחוו לך בני אמיד"

23. "הנה אנכי הולך למות ולמה לי הבכורה" (כ"ה:לב), עשו explains רד"ק. 23. "הנה אנכי הולך למות ולמה לי הבכורה" (כ"ה:לב), עשו explains רד"ק. "He didn't know if he would be alive from one day to the next, "מסכן בכל יום בעודו החיות שמא יטרפוהו", leaving him no desire for the בכורה, which would give him the rights to the inheritance after his father's death. רד"ק implements this explanation in his understanding of why רבקה loved עשו as opposed to יעקב הולך בדרך חיים ועשו בדרך המות... לשום עצמו בסכנה בכל, עשו was willing to sacrifice the present for a better future. עשו explains עשו's rash actions as a result of his erroneous conclusion that his father was not wealthy, having nothing to pass down to him. עשו was mistaken in his presumption that the בכורה was limited to money.

24. By marrying outside of the family, עשו failed the prerequisite of being part of the chosen nation. Interestingly, when עשו was later trying to regain his father's love, he married into the family of ישמעאל (כ"ח:ט').

Finally understanding the importance of the בכורה and the ברכה, עשו begged for his own ברכה — "ברכני גם אני אבי" (כז:לד). The ברכה that עשו received, "ועל חרבך תחיה ואת אחיך תעבד והיה כאשר תריד ופרקת עלו מעל צוארדך" (כז:מ), resembles the ברכה of ישמעאל. ישמעאל was promised that he would initially be raised but subsequently be let down, as opposed to בני ישראל who were initially let down ("גר יהיה ורעד") and subsequently raised ברכוש ("ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול.."). Thus עשו would only be raised when בני ישראל were brought down. This ברכה befits עשו, for just as עשו acted rashly for the sake of immediate benefit, so too, in future times, he will only be successful for a limited time.

Review: עשו = Fail

1. אמונה — He did not understand the importance of the בכורה and inheriting all that יצחק stood for and consequently married outside the family of תרח.
2. חסד — Maintained the כבוד of אב מדה, but the מפרשים recognize no signs of any other positive quality.
3. ארץ ישראל — He did not understand the importance of inheriting ארץ ישראל.

F. יעקב

Test #1: "ויתרצו הבנים בקרבה"

The tests of יעקב are intertwined with the tests of עשו.²⁵ Contrary to עשו, whose test was to guard his rightful בכורה, יעקב's test was to acquire the בכורה. He is described as "איש תם ישב אהלים" (כה:כו), passively following his older brother from the moment of birth: "וידו אחות בעקב: "ואחרי כן יצא אחיו [יעקב] וידו אחות בעקב: עשו's awareness of the importance of the בכורה awakened in him an active desire to prevail.

Test #2: "ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע"

Fleeing from his family in order to escape his brother, he was promised both protection and those aspects of ברכת אברהם that his father had not articulated.²⁶

25. He did not automatically deserve it when עשו failed. This can be seen by comparing אדם's children. When הכל was killed, it appeared that קין was the only one left to inherit from his father. On account of his lack of credibility, he did not acquire it by default, but rather אדם had a third son who deserved the inheritance.

26. He is given the promise of ארץ ישראל precisely as he is leaving ארץ ישראל to

אברהם	יעקב
"הארץ אשר אתה ראה לך אתננה לזרעך עד עולם..." (יג:טו)	"הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך..." (כח:יג)
"ושמתי את זרעך כעפר הארץ" (יג:טז)	"והיה זרעך כעפר הארץ..." (כח:יד)
"ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה" (יב:ג)	"ונברכו בך כל משפחת האדמה" (כח:יד)

יעקב was directed by his father to marry a woman from his uncle's house: לא תקח אשה מבנות כנען. קום לך פדנה ארם ביתה בתואל אבי אמך וקח לך משם (ב:יולך פדנה ארם אל לבן...) (כח:ה) — and he obeyed — אשה מבנות לבן" (כח:א-ב)

יעקב settled into his uncle לבן's house, married both of לבן's daughters, רחל and לאה, and appeared to be setting up a permanent home. One day, ה' appeared to יעקב to remind him of his focus: וואהיה "שוב אל ארץ אבותיך ולמולדתך ואהיה" (לא:ג). This command was the opposite of the one אברהם had received: "...לך לך מארצך וממלדתך...". יעקב's challenge was not to travel to a foreign place to undertake a new lifestyle, rather to return to a familiar place where his life was in danger, with only the words "ואהיה עמך" to relieve his fears. Correctly predicting that לבן would make it difficult for him to leave, יעקב left secretly. He legitimately feared returning to his angry father-in-law and moving forward, as well as meeting his homicidal brother עשו.

Although his delay in returning to ארץ ישראל may seem to reveal some deficiency in his allegiance, his true connection to ארץ ישראל was revealed by his later hesitation to go to מערים at יוסף's invitation. Despite expectations that he would be eager to see his beloved son, יעקב was skeptical about departing from ארץ ישראל and only agreed to leave when promised: "אל תירא מרדה מצרימה כי לגוי גדול אשימך שם. אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה ואנכי אעלך גם עלה..." (מו:ג-ד). יוסף also made ארץ and the rest of his sons swear to bury him in ארץ ישראל's importance and the dangers in abandoning it. He teaches that if there comes a time where one must leave ארץ ישראל, he should be careful not to get too comfortable and lose sight of that which is genuinely important.

יעקב's חסד of מדה is evident in his conduct towards לבן, where in spite of multiple instances of trickery, he behaved with great composure and control of his anger towards his fellow man. It was only when לבן chased יעקב and accused him falsely that יעקב was finally upset, but was quick to make

ה' asking נדר to protect him from the tremendous dangers that he was facing as he abandoned his country, and promising to fulfil his mission when he was allowed to return.

peace and eager to make a treaty with him.²⁷

Review: יעקב = Pass

1. אמונה — Left לבן and returned to ארץ ישראל to face עשו.
2. חסד — Was patient in his dealings with לבן.
3. ארץ ישראל — He did not want to leave ארץ ישראל and travel to מערים and requested to be buried in ארץ ישראל.



As noted above, every successor of אברהם was required to have a chosen mother and father. Before תרח, the men were the only important factors in the list of generations, evidenced by the list of תולדות in which only the men are mentioned. After תרח, the list of generations becomes more specific and the men and women are viewed as equally important. In the narratives following the birth of תרח, the אמהות play an essential role in the formation of the chosen nation and thus were tested to the same extent as the אבות. They had to be descendents of the family of תרח and have the three chosen qualities.

G. שרה

אברהם, tested until proven worthy of becoming the אב המון גוים, had his name modified from אברם to אברהם. שרה's name, changed from שרי to שרה, received the same additional letter, symbolizing the same promise. Furthermore, in the מדרש, שרה is equated with אברהם (מד"ר ח:ט), "אברהם ושרה היו גרים" (מד"ר ח:ט), "אברהם ושרה היו מכינים טבילה לכולם, הוא לגברים והיא לנשים" (זוהר ח"א:קא). How can שרה be compared to אברהם? What actions did she perform that deemed her worthy of the high status of being the "mother" of the chosen nation?

First, חז"ל explain that שרה was a descendent of תרח.²⁸ This fact can be demonstrated by the פסוקים in which אברהם explained to שרה that שרה

27. יעקב also displayed the מדה of חסד, which is hinted to in some of his actions. יו"ד "כ"ה:כ"ט) יעקב נזיד" (כ"ה:כ"ט) יעקב was cooking lentil soup because אברהם had died and he was being מנחם to his father (ב"ב ט"ז:). פי הבאר וישק את צאן לבני" (כ"ט:י).

According to רש"י יעקב alone returned to the camp, in search of his קטנים. He could have burdened a servant with this dangerous mission, but rather he went back himself.

28. "ושרי היתה בתו של הרן שנאמר ויקח אברם ונחור להם נשים... בת הרן אבי מלכה ואבי יסכה. ויסכה" (מדרש תהלים פק"ח). היא שרה ונתמלא כל העולם ממנה" (מדרש תהלים פק"ח).

was really also his sister, (כי:יב) "גם אחתי בת אבי היא"²⁹

Test #1: "כי אשה יפת מראה את"

Beauty is "ארבע נשים יפפות היו בעולם, שרה, רחב, אביגיל, ואסתר" (מגילה טו). Beauty is an extremely dangerous feature bestowed upon individuals in order to test them. שרה, on account of her beauty, was seized by the king of מצרים, but emerged untouched.

Although the תורה does not provide details of the events that befell שרה in פרעה's chambers, it is possible to surmise what happened through comparison with other stories in תנ"ך. שרה apparently refused to sleep with the king of מצרים and, through the help of ה', came out unscathed.

Test #2: "שרה אשת אברהם לא ילדה לו..."

אברהם was an עקרה, unable to have children. At the same time אברהם was promised a son, (טו:ד), "כי אם אשר יצא ממעיך הוא יירשך" (טו:ד). שרה understood the significance of אברהם's having children, although she herself could not produce them. Two alternatives presented themselves: she could sacrifice her husband's opportunity of bearing ה' chosen nation, or she could sacrifice her own opportunity, allowing her husband to have another wife, displaying her dedication to אברהם and his mission. שרה chose the latter and forfeited what she believed to be her only opportunity to give birth to the chosen nation, (טז:ב).³⁰ "בא נא אל שפחתי אולי אבנה ממנה" (טז:ב) שרה's anticipation to adopt the baby as her own, "טוב לי שאתן לו שפחתי לאשה, אולי אבנה ממנה ויהיה לי כבני" (טז:א)

29. There is a מחלוקת if this statement made by אברהם is to be understood literally. רש"י and עורא believed that it was literal. רב"ק and רס"ג, רשב"ם, רמב"ן, רש"י all believed that אברהם only said it due to the pressures of the moment, so as not to be killed for lying to the king.

30. שרה's maid, became pregnant with a son. It appeared as though this son, אברהם, would succeed his father אברהם. Taking this into account, הגר no longer behaved as a mere maid, but rather as the genuine wife of אברהם (the עקרת "עקרת" replacing שרה). As a result, she tortured שרה until she ran away and later dismissed her from אברהם's house. The מדרשים and מדרשים disagree regarding שרה's possible justification in torturing הגר and expelling her. רבה claims "בת מאה כבת עשרים שנה לחטוא [שלא חטאה]" (בר"ר יח:א), implying that she was virtuous throughout her life. ותענה, שרה's actions in a positive light, illustrates ספרו. "ולא תבוז עוד את גברתך, לאות שכן יקרא לכל מבוז ישראל..."; כדי שתכיר שהיא משועבדת "היה ראוי לה להמשיך את ידה לכבודו ולא לענותה, ולא מדת חסידות ונפש רד"ק disagrees. טובה... וזה שעשתה שרה לא היה טוב בעיני ה' חשבה כי מאחר שזרע אברם יהיה ממנה, כי תהיה גבירה, He also describes הגר's conduct, deeming her deserving of this treatment,

Test #3: "שוב אשוב אליך כעת חיה והנה בן לשרה..."

שרה overheard a conversation between אברהם and their three guests, claiming that she herself would bear a son. שרה responded in disbelief, ותצחק, and laughed. That her reaction was displeasing is evident in ה' response, היפלא... "למה זה צחקה שרה... היפלא, מהי דבר..." (יח:יד). In contrast to אברהם who laughed out of joy, her laugh stemmed from disbelief in her physical ability to bear a child (see רמב"ן) and therefore denied her laughter — "לא צחקתי" — and lied — "ותכחש שרה" (יח:טו). רמב"ן clarifies the scenario in order to shed light on שרה's actions. Throughout the guests' visit, שרה remained inside the tent. As a result, שרה never saw her guests and could not know that they were really מלאכי ה' and therefore did not believe their news. When אברהם confronted her, she denied her laughter out of fear of her husband, not realizing that the accusation was in fact directed from ה'. Based on this analysis, one may claim that she failed test #3 and therefore needed another test of אמונה (similar to test #1) to determine whether she was worthy to have the chosen son.

Test #4: "ויסע משם אברהם... ויגר בגרר"

Once more אברהם was faced with a situation where he must warn his wife about her beauty and remind her of the strategy that they utilized in מערים. It seems unfathomable that this unusual occurrence would happen twice to a 90-year-old woman, yet, as a result of ה' need to retest שרה, it transpired again. Descriptions of שרה's beauty reached אבימלך, the king of

"חטאה אמנו שרה בעניי זה... ושמע ה' אל עניה ונתן לה בן שיחא פרא, ולא היתה חוששת למעות שרי גבירתה לאשר תעוה" אדם לענות זרע אברהם ושרה בכל מיני ענוי"

There are also disputes among מפרשים and מדרשים regarding שרה's later decision to expel הגר and ישמעאל from their home. "בשביל שגרשה שרה להגר מביתה, ויתרא שרה את בן הגר displays her actions in a negative light. "נענשה" (בעל הטורים שם) ולא בן אברהם כי הכירה בו שחור לחלקה של אמו, שלמדה אותו נמוסי ע"ז, וזהו שבחה של שרה, שלא מתוך קנאה גרשה אותו אלא מסבה זו, כי לא זה היה מתוך קנאה לא היה הקביה מסכים עמה..." (זוהר ח"א קי"ח) presents her actions positively.

We can understand this situation according to our theory as follows. שרה, once more, was confronted with two choices; she could abandon אברהם, leaving הגר to continue the nation, or fight to regain her status. This test resembled the test of לוט (see above). She had to choose between securing אברהם's ideals inside of her by fighting for her former position, or effortlessly letting הגר succeed. Hoping to regain her status as the main wife, שרה confronted הגר. רמב"ן (ש"ז:ב) writes about שרה's devoutness, "שרה לא נתיאשה מאברהם ולא הרחיקה עצמה מאצלו, כי היא אשתו, והוא אישה"

גר, and he seized her. אברהם was once again powerless to rescue his wife. שרה was faced with two alternatives: to leave אברהם and sleep with the king, or to do everything in her capacity to be freed. Based on what happened in מערים, one can assume that שרה chose the latter and turned to ה' for means of an escape. Consequently, ה' liberated her and rewarded her by giving her a baby boy who would be the heir to the chosen nation.

Review: שרה = Pass

1. אמונה — Turned to God and adhered to אברהם in all situations.
2. חסד — Cooked for the 3 מלאכים.
3. ארץ ישראל — Followed her husband to ארץ ישראל twice: once at לך לך and secondly after refusing פרעה in מערים.

H. הגר

In אברהם married הגר, פרק ט"ז and as a result of becoming pregnant, began behaving as the עקרת הבית instead of the insignificant שפחה (see רש"י "ותקל גברתה בעיניה. ותאמר: שרה גברתה חמסי עליך" (טו:ד-ה) "ותענה — הגר — "ותברח מפניה" (טו:ו)). Consequently, שרה tormented הגר and induced her to abscond — "ועם הנכר", This was הגר's downfall; if הגר had completely grasped the notion of the "עם הנכר", she would not have withdrawn from אברהם regardless of her suffering. [She acted differently than שרה, who remained with אברהם through all the calamities that she confronted.³¹] Consequently, הגר forfeited her opportunity and in the following פרק, אברהם was told that שרה, in fact, would be the one to have the chosen son. As a result of the rule established earlier, that each successor must have a chosen mother and father, as well as his own failings indicated above, שרה was rejected, as evident in פרק כ"א.

I. רבקה

שרה begins by relating an unconventional "story" in which רבקה needed to prove her willingness to offer both אליעזר and his camels water (see רש"י and עזרא).

Test #1: "ולקחת אשה לבני ליצחק"

Arriving at the well of נהרים, ארם, after a long journey, אליעזר asked ה' to

31. There are also מדרשים that maintain that הגר served עבודה זרה after being dismissed by אברהם. This proved her lack of אמונה in ה', which automatically disqualified her from the "competition" for the chosen nation: "מאברהם ועבדה אלילי בית אביה, חזרה בתשובה ונקשרה במעשים טובים (וזהר ח"א:קל"ג):

produce a scenario whereby the future wife of יחזק would provide him with water and offer to feed his camels. What was the purpose of this stratagem as opposed to asking directions to אברהם's relatives?

There were three conditions necessary for one to be part of אברהם's chosen nation: 1. חסד, 2. אמונה, 3. Desire to live in ארץ ישראל. The עבד's test was to find a girl from the family of תרח who embodied these qualities. רבקה passed the test of חסד: "ותאמר שתה אדני...ותכל להשקתו ותאמר גם לגמליך אשאב..." (כד:יח-יט) as רש"י writes, "היא ליכנס בביתו של אברהם" (כד:יד).

Test #2: "אלך"

At first glance, it seems that the conversation that took place between the עבד and רבקה related only to her family and to where he would sleep that night. The פסוקים, however, narrate that רבקה ran home to inform her family about this foreign man, "ויהי כראת את הנום...וכשמעו את דברי רבקה, אחתו לאמר כה דבר אלי האיש..." (כד:דל) emphasizing that she relayed his words to her family. Thus, it is likely that the עבד spoke about a substantial issue, such as his purpose in ארם נהרים. The negotiations began as אליעזר strategically recounted his phenomenal tale of discovering רבקה. All were convinced that "מה' יצא הדבר" agreeing, "וכאשר דבר ה'" (כד:נא) until the following morning when לבן and his mother began to object. רבקה's second test, to leave her father's house and birthplace, in order to follow a stranger and marry a man about whom she knew nothing resembles the original test of אברהם — "לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך אל הארץ אשר אראיך" (יב:א).

אברהם	רבקה
"לך לך" (יב:א)	"אלך" (כד:נח)
Left his homeland, birthplace, and father's house	Left her homeland, birthplace, and father's house
Went to an unknown place	Went to an unknown place
"ומקללך אאר וגברכו" בד כל משפחת אדמה"	"יירש זרעך את שער שנאו"
Was promised "ואברכך...והיה ברכה"	Was given jewelry and riches
Traveled to ארץ ישראל	Traveled to ארץ ישראל

ותקם רבקה, "אלך" (כד:נח). The פסוקים depict her actions, "ויקח העבד את רבקה" (כד:סא) as gently guided by אליעזר, "ונערתי ותרכבה..."

thus remains unclear from the פסוקים whether the initiative began with רבקה or whether she allowed herself to be passively 'taken' (similar to the ambiguity regarding לוט: לוט אתו לוט" vs. "וילך אתו לוט" vs. "ויקח אברם...את לוט"). Unlike לוט, however, once she saw יצחק, she chose to remain with him and the family of אברהם, separating herself from her family.

Review: רבקה = Pass

1. אמונה — She separated from her family in order to marry יצחק.
2. חסד — She supplied אברהם עבד and his camels with water to drink.
3. ארץ ישראל — She abandoned her home to live in ארץ ישראל.

J. רחל

Test #1: "ויהי בבקר והנה היא לאה"

The most vital piece of information for the story is "ויהי בבקר והנה היא לאה" (כט:יח). Imagine the story from רחל's perspective. It was her wedding night and she was exhilarated, as she had waited patiently for seven long years to marry her beloved. The hour was approaching, the sun went down, she prepared herself, when suddenly, she saw her father leading her older sister towards the wedding. What could she do? She could scream and dash into יעקב's room to warn him. Obviously רחל did nothing of the kind as she watched her sister take her place, allowing יעקב to be deluded until the morning: "ויהי היתה רחל שותקת, וראתה סבלנותיה ביד אחותה, גמרא writes. בבקר והנה היא לאה" (מד"ת ויצא) conveying רחל's virtue of חסד. The מדרש expands upon this מדה, תינשא לי אמרה לו כן, ברם אבי רמאי הוא, ויש לי אחות קשישה, מדה ממני ולא יחתן אותי לפניו, אמר לה, אחיו אנכי ברמאות, מסר לה סימנים להכירה, כשהלך להכניס את לאה במקומה, חשבה רחל בלבה, עכשיו תתבייש אחותי, מסרה לה הסימנים" (בבא בתרא קכג.). Not only did רחל remain silent, but according to the מדרש she even revealed to לאה her private signals that she had arranged with יעקב, in order not to embarrass her sister. Her מדה of חסד was tested and she passed test #1. Soon after רחל married יעקב as well, and came face to face with a life in which she had to share the man that she loved with her older sister.³²

Test #2: "ורחל עקרה"

At first, the situation appeared promising for רחל, since יעקב's love for

32. The מדרש wants us to learn from this story what רחל's primary intentions were. רחל wanted to marry יעקב, not only because she loved him but also due to her realization that he was a link in the formation of the chosen nation and therefore, "אמרה אם אין אני כדאי שיבנה העולם ממני, יבנה מאחותי" (בר"ד ע"א:ח).

her exceeded his love for לאה and he treated her accordingly, but then misfortune struck. רחל realized that she did not have the ability to bear children. Moreover, her older sister, with whom she was competing, became pregnant.

Each had an advantage and a disadvantage over the other. לאה had children but lacked יעקב's love, whereas רחל had יעקב's love but lacked children. לאה, therefore, desperately wanted יעקב's love in order that he would choose her children and רחל was desperate to have the ability to bear the chosen children: (ל:ב) "הבה לי בנים ואם אין מתה אנכי" (ל:ב).

רחל had two choices. She could enjoy her husband's love and forget about children and the chosen nation or she could relinquish more of her husband's love in attempt to bear children and remain part of the upcoming nation. Following in שרה's footsteps, רחל chose the latter option, requesting of יעקב to marry her maid, בלהה.³³ רחל succeeded in devoting herself to יעקב and the concept the of Jewish people.

Test 3: "תני נא לי מדודאי בנך"

Following the birth of four sons to לאה, two sons to each of their maids, and another two sons to לאה, יעקב's relationship with לאה became strengthened. This is evident through the names of the שבטים. The older children have names that reflect despondence on לאה's part: ראובן — "כי ראה ה' בעיניי כי — ראוּבֵן" — "כי שמע ה' כי שוואה אנכי" — שמעון and עתה יאהבנו אישי" but the later children's names are increasingly confident: יהודה — "הפעם אודה את ה'", without reference to being unsuccessful in attracting יעקב's attention (R' Hirsch). As a result, רחל began to lose her special relationship with יעקב as his love was divided between four wives. The extent of רחל's desperation is apparent through the story of the דודאים, in which לאה received flowers from her eldest son ראובן and רחל wanted them. אבן עזרא and רד"ק cite an opinion that these flowers were an aid for women to get pregnant, teaching that רחל was willing to give up a night with יעקב in order to have a plant, which may have helped her chances of bearing the chosen nation.

Test #4: "צא מן הארץ הזאת"

רחל lived in נהרים, in the house of ארם, in לבן, her entire life. Even after her marriage, her husband moved immediately into her house. After the birth of יוסף, the family moved to a distance of only three days from her

33. In the beginning, רחל relied on her husband and his love, waiting for him to pray for her, as his father had done for his mother (רמב"ן). יעקב alerted her to the reality that he could not help her, "התחת אלקים אנכי" (ל:ב), and she then realized that she needed to put in the effort and take matters into her own hands.

father's house. One day, יעקב returned home to inform his wives that it was time for them to journey to his homeland, ארץ כנען. There were two potential reactions to his statement: either in the negative — “Absolutely not, you never mentioned when we got married that you were planning on leaving my house,” or in the affirmative — “We will follow you wherever you go.” רחל and לאה chose the latter. They agreed: “כל אשר אמרנו...כל אשר אמר אלוקים אליך עשה” (לאי:יז-טז) העשר אשר הציל אלוקים מאבינו לנו ועתה כל אשר אמר אלוקים אליך עשה” (לאי:יז-טז). Without any arguments or negotiations, רחל and לאה agreed to leave their homeland to travel to a foreign land, a land that would become theirs and their children's forever.³⁴

Review: רחל = Pass

1. אמונה — Remained devoted to יעקב and continued hoping and trying to bear a child to continue the chosen nation.
2. חסד — רחל displayed her מדה of חסד as she silently acquiesced to her sister's marriage to יעקב. According to the מדרש, she gave up her שמנים with יעקב in order that לאה would not be embarrassed.
3. ארץ ישראל — רחל was willing and eager to abandon her homeland and move to a new life in ארץ כנען.

K. לאה

Test #1: “כי שנואה לאה”

Now imagine the above stories from לאה's perspective. How would

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34. As a result, רחל's final wish was granted by having children who were part of עם ישראל and her burial site became the location where בני ישראל would come to weep. It states in ירמיהו “קול ברמה נשמע נהי בכי תמרורים רחל מבכה על בניה מאנה להנחם על בניה כי אננה. כה אמר ה' מנעי קולך מבכי ועיניך יקפצה” (ירמיהו:יג:טז). מדרש The writes, “מדמעה כי יש שכר לפעולתך נאם ה' וישבו בנים לגבולם” (לאי:יז-טז) רחל אמנו לפני הקב"ה ואמרה רבונו של עולם, גלוי וידוע לפניך שיעקב עבדך אהבני אהבה יתרה, ועבד בשבילי לאבא שבע שנים, וכשהשלימו אותן שבע שנים והגיעו זמן נשואי לבעלי, יעץ אבי החליפני לבעלי בשביל אחותי, והוקשה עלי הדבר עד מאד, כי נודע לי העצה, והודעתני לבעלי ומסרתני לו סימן שיכיר ביני ובין אחותי, כדי שלא יוכל אבי החליפני, ולאחר כן נחמתני בעצמי וסבלתי את תאותי, ורחמתי על אחותי שלא תצא לחרפה, ולערב חלפו אחותי לבעלי בשבילי, ומסרתני לאחותי כל הסימנים שמסרתני לבעלי כדי שיהא סבור שהיא רחל, ולא עוד אלא שנכנסתי תחת המטה שהיה שוכב עם אחותי, הוא היה מדבר עמה, היא שותקת ואני משביתו על כל דבר ודבר כדי שלא יכיר לקול אחותי, וגמלתי חסד עמה ולא קנאתי בה, ולא הוצאתיה לחרפה, ומה אני שאני בשר ודם עפר ואפר, לא קנאתי להערה שלי ולא הוצאתיה לחרפה, ואתה מלך חי וקיים רחמן, מפני מה קנאתה לעבודת אלילים שאין בה ממש, והגלית לבני ונהרגו בחרב ועשו אויבים בם כדכונם, מיד נתגלגלו רחמיו של הקב"ה ואמר, בשביל רחל אני מחזיר את ישראל למקומם” (פתיחתא איכ"ד).

you feel if your younger sister was about to be married to a man who truly loved her and your father forced you to marry him instead, knowing that he does not love you? לאה found herself married to a man who preferred her sister, hated her, and treated her only a little better than the maidservants. לאה, despite these circumstances, perceived a greater goal and a sufficient motive to remain with her lot. She devoted herself to יעקב despite the pain and loneliness, because she realized that by adhering to יעקב, her children would be given the opportunity to be the heirs to the chosen nation of ה'. This opportunity outweighed any physical or emotional pleasures that she could have in a marriage of love. Her test was an investigation of her devotion, and how much torture she could tolerate for her children's benefit:

1. Her younger sister was the "עקרת הבית".
2. When יעקב was scared of meeting עשו, he hid רחל and יוסף in the back, behind לאה.
3. יעקב favored יוסף רחל's child and gave him a special coat, a כתנת פסים, to display it.
4. She knew that she was hated and named her children accordingly (see above).

It is interesting to note that יעקב favored רחל but לאה favored לבן. לבן tricked יעקב into marrying לאה and inspected רחל's tent to a greater extent as he was searching for his תרפים, displaying his distrust of her. רחל לבן sent לאה, not רחל, to watch his sheep and supply them with water. It seemed that לאה was the older, special daughter who received special treatment. Once they were married to יעקב, the tables turned and רחל was treated as the "favorite one" and לאה as the "hated one." It is twice as difficult to pass a test when one is in a situation that is foreign and antithetical to the one to which he is accustomed. This was the challenge for רחל and לאה. They both succeed in adhering to יעקב and both were therefore chosen to be mothers of the chosen nation.

לאה had four sons before רחל had a child through בלהה, and six sons before רחל had any of her own. She had ample opportunity to make fun of רחל and make her life more miserable — as חנה later did to פנינה (שמואל א פרק א) — but לאה did not take this opportunity and proved to be a kind person with אדם לחבירו of מדות. The מדרש further develops this מדה: "דנה לאה דין: מדה מדרש" בעצמה ואמרה, שנים עשר שבטים עתידים לצאת מיעקב, ששה יצאו ממני וארבעה מן השפחות הרי עשרה, אם זהו זכר לא תהא אחותי כאחת מן השפחות, מיד נהפכה לבת והוה יואחר ילדה בת" (ברכות ס). This sensitivity for her sister's feelings is also evident in another מדרש which depicts לאה going out of her way to save her sister embarrassment: "ותצא לאה לקראתו - מכאן אנו למדים על ענוותנותה של לאה, שלא אמרה בפני 'ותצא לאה לקראתו - מכאן אנו למדים על ענוותנותה של לאה, שלא אמרה בפני (וזהר ח"א קנו). אחותה כלום, אלא הקדימה בדרך..." (וזהר ח"א קנו).

In the end, both לאה and רחל received their wishes. רחל wished for children, and was buried in a location where all of בני ישראל would come to pray, and לאה, who was desperate for יעקב's love, was buried next to יעקב in "סדור שלהם במערת המכפלה...יעקב סמוך ללאה" (זוהר ח"ג קסד.). המכפלה מערת

It is evident from these stories that both רחל and לאה passed their tests and thus together formed the chosen nation. When רות was later married to בועז, the פסוק states, "יתן ה' את האשה הבאה אל ביתך כרחל וכלאה אשר בנו שתיחם את, פסוק (רות ד:יא) בית ישראל ועשה חיל..." (רות ד:יא).

Review: לאה = Pass

1. אמונה — Remained devoted to יעקב regardless of his hatred towards her.
2. חסד — She did not tease רחל despite the satisfaction she would have received.
3. ארץ ישראל — לאה was willing without questioning or arguing to leave her homeland and move to ארץ כנען to be buried in ארץ ישראל.



To conclude, this paper has demonstrated that the entire family of תרח was endowed with the potential to be the future אבות and אמהות of the chosen nation. Each member was therefore tested in order to prove that he/she possessed the three chosen qualities: חסד, אמונה, and an understanding of the importance of ארץ ישראל. After the original pair was chosen, their successors were required to have *both* the chosen mother and father in order to perpetuate the chosen nation. The goal of ספר בראשית is to record the lives and challenges of תרח's family helping בני ישראל to understand why the אבות were chosen to formulate the Jewish nation.*

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יציאת מצרים and ספר ירמיהו: A Study in Contrasts

Miriam Vishniavsky and Tami Schwimmer

AT THE END OF THE PERIOD בית ראשון, ירמיהו's task as a נביא was to chastise ישראל עם for turning away from ה'. His ספר predicts the imminent גלות that would result from their sins. ירמיהו speaks of the impending destruction of ישראל עם in his time. Many ideas in ספר ירמיהו parallel themes in ספר שמות, deliberately contrasting the redemption and salvation from מצרים with the destruction and exile to בבל.

The הקדשות (initiations) of both ירמיהו and משה contained elements of fire. One of ירמיהו's first visions was of a סיר נפוח, a boiling pot. מלכים comments that the fire under the pot symbolized destruction. Similarly, in ספר שמות ה' introduced Himself to משה through a burning bush. Unlike the fire under ירמיהו's pot, however, this fire was not destructive; it burnt the bush but did not consume it. The סנה בוער באש symbolized the pain that ה' felt for the sufferings of ישראל בני, and was accompanied by a promise to redeem עם ישראל from מצרים. Although both הקדשות included a symbolic element of fire, the fire in ירמיהו's הקדשה was one of death and destruction while the fire in משה's הקדשה was one of rebirth and redemption.

Another symbol common to both הקדשות is a staff. משה's staff brought about the מכות which punished פרעה and saved בני ישראל. ירמיהו, though, saw a מקל שקד, which symbolized בני ישראל's destruction.

The missions of the two נביאים contrast each other as well. משה's mission was to bring בני ישראל from גלות/עבדות/גאולה as they received the חרות and journeyed to ארץ ישראל. ירמיהו's mission, on the other hand, was to bring them out from the חרות of ישראל ארץ to the גלות of בבל.

Another story connected with גלות מצרים that may be compared to ירמיהו is that of יוסף. יוסף's dreams were quasi-prophecies. When he related them to his brothers, they became so enraged that they threw him into a pit. The פסוק describes the pit: "זיהבור דיק אין בו מים" (בראשית לז:כד). From there, יוסף was sold to מצרים and soon after, imprisoned. ירמיהו, too, received נבואות that infuriated his listeners. and the nation became so angry with

ירמיהו that they threw him first into jail and then into a pit, described as (לח:ו) "ובבור אין מים".

ירמיהו removed יוסף from jail because of his extraordinary ability to interpret his dream and יוסף then gained respect and power in מצרים. He used his new power to save his family from the famine in כנען. ירמיהו, however, remained in jail until ירושלים was finally captured. He never earned respect as יוסף did, rather he continuously lost the respect of the people. Instead of saving ישראל ירמיהו foretold the nation's destruction. יוסף and ירמיהו had similar experiences and suffered many of the same torments, but their stories ended in opposite ways. יוסף ultimately saved his nation; ירמיהו saw them through their downfall.

ספר ירמיהו describes the complete destruction of the people: "ויהי דבר ה' אל ירמיהו ה' אל...לא תקח לך אשה ולא יהיו לך בנים...במקום הזה" (טז:א-ב) to marry or have children. This may be contrasted to בני ישראל in מצרים. There, they multiplied at an unbelievable rate. "ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו, שמות א:ו" says, "ויבני ישראל פרו וישרצו, וירבו ויעצמו במאד מאד ותמלא הארץ אותם" quotes a מדרש רש"י that states that בני ישראל had six children at one time. While the generation of בית ראשון was forced to cease multiplying, the generation of יציאת מצרים could hardly stop.

The two generations are contrasted not only at the birth of their children, but also at their deaths. The people who died in the time of the destruction of בית ראשון and the exile to בבל were not given proper burials: "וירמיהו טז:ד) "ממותי תחלואים ימותו לא יספדו ולא יקברו לדמן על פני האדמה יהיו" (ירמיהו טז:ד). So many people died that they lined the streets and were consumed by עוף השמים. Conversely, the generation of יציאת מצרים was very careful about proper burial; they carried יוסף's bones in the desert for forty years from מצרים to ארץ ישראל.

When speaking of the destruction of בני ישראל, ה' says, "אני אתכם, בני ישראל" (ירמיהו כא:ה) "בד נטויה ובזרוע חזקה ובאף ובחמה..." These phrases are often associated with גאולה, but are rarely used when discussing destruction. It is interesting, however, that when ה' speaks of destruction, He places יד with נטויה and זרוע with חזקה, but when He speaks of גאולה, the words are arranged differently, (זרוע נטויה, שמות ו:ו).

There is another parallel between the exodus of the Jews from מצרים and the descent of the Jews into גלות. In the time of ירמיהו, ה' commanded עם ישראל to leave ירושלים and subject themselves to the command of מצרים, yet many still hoped to fight and overcome the enemy. In response, ה' promised to destroy those who stayed in ארץ ישראל and save those who submitted to מלך בבל. In the time of יציאת מצרים, ה' wanted to bring בני ישראל out of מצרים and into ארץ ישראל. Those who left מצרים were saved, while those who re-

mained were destroyed, similar to the situation in the time of ירמיהו. The ironic difference is that in the time of ירמיהו, those who remained in ארץ ישראל were destroyed while in the time of יציאת מצרים, those who left גלות to enter ארץ ישראל were the ones saved.

The contrasts set up by the נביא reflect עם ישראל's behavior. By disobeying ה' in the time of ירמיהו, עם ישראל essentially showed a lack of the אמונה that was required of them as a result of being saved from מצרים. They lost the message of יציאת מצרים, and therefore needed to be reminded of ה' presence and His ability to save and destroy. In order to demonstrate this, ה' acted upon עם ישראל in a way which directly opposed His saving them from מצרים. When they could no longer remember ה' greatness through חסד, He acted upon them with דין. ירמיהו chose his words carefully in order to point out to his generation that they were breaking down that which had been established at the time of יציאת מצרים. Since they began to act in ways contrary to their forefathers, ה' mirrored their behavior, reversing the חסדים He performed for the יוצאי מצרים.

”אז ישיר משה שיר לא ינשה בצאתי ממצרים,
ויקונן ירמיהו ונהה נהי נהיה בצאתי מירושלים (קינות לתשעה באב).“

The Right to be Wrong

Sarah C. Davis

IN ח' שמות, THE תורה DESCRIBES HOW יתרו, משה's father-in-law, heard news about בני ישראל and went to them, bringing משה's wife and two sons with him. Not long after arriving at the camp, he felt compelled to offer his son-in-law some unsolicited advice. יתרו saw משה sitting in judgment of the people from morning to night and protested, "מה הדבר הזה אשר אתה עושה לעם? מדוע אתה יושב לבדך וכל העם נעב עליך מן בקר עד ערב?" Presumably, he was bothered by the fact that the people were burdened with having to stand in line all day waiting for a turn to ask their questions because משה was the only one serving as שופט.

לדרוש אלוקים" משה responded that the people were coming to him רשב"ם. According to ח' in such a way that he could ask ח' to judge their cases. He then went on to elaborate on what it was he was doing: the people brought him court-type cases for his judgment, and also came to learn ח' ותורתיו. Apparently, משה was saying that no one else had the ability to judge and teach Torah like he did, because only he had the ability to ask ח' Himself when he didn't know the answer: anyone else would have to rely solely on his own knowledge and logic, without the benefit of ח' confirmation that the decision was correct. יתרו, however, was still not satisfied, on the grounds that משה simply could not do this job well enough on his own; he needed help, and there must be a way to deal with smaller matters, while serving himself as a one-man "Supreme Court". משה decided to take his father-in-law's advice; he chose the judges and set up the system.

What is behind this exchange between משה and יתרו? Perhaps this debate can be understood on a deeper level as an issue of מסורה, a question of how ח' תורה can and should be transmitted to עם ישראל on a day-to-day, practical, continuous basis. משה believed that only he, of all בני ישראל, was qualified to answer שאלות for the people, because he was the direct link with

דבר ה'. Even if he would teach what he knew to others so they could serve as judges and teachers, there would still be something lacking, since there was always a chance of error in transmission or individual logic, so that it would be impossible to determine with certainty what ה' wants in a given situation. Because no matter how intelligent the שופטים are, how carefully they transmit exactly what they *think* they learned — only משה, with the ability to ask ה' and receive a direct answer, could be sure.

יתרו, on the other hand, felt that although משה's way might be ideal, it was practically impossible: one person simply could not do all this alone. Moreover, although he didn't mention this point outright, it is clear that משה would not be around forever; if he didn't set up a (relatively) reliable system of human transmission now, while he was still around to supervise and get the system going, what would happen after his death? יתרו maintained that there are people qualified enough to serve as the transmitters of Torah, given that there is a necessity for some system of transmission beyond משה: they may not have the confirmation of direct communication with ה', but they can still be "אנשי חיל יראי אלקים אנשי אמת שונאי בעע", which is good enough — at least for the "small" matters. After hearing יתרו's argument, משה decided to follow it, immediately choosing "אנשי חיל" (leaving out the rest of the qualifications suggested by יתרו, implying that he'd been convinced even beyond what יתרו said) to judge small matters and bring him the difficult cases (not the "big" issues, as יתרו had termed it — an important distinction, though not within the scope of our discussion here).

Why did משה take יתרו's advice? In פסוק ט', יתרו implied that ה' would want משה to take his advice ("שמע...ויהי אלקים עמך"), and in פסוק כ"ג he implied that his advice should only be taken upon approval from Him. Yet there is no sign of משה seeking or receiving this approval before going ahead with the plan. How does he know ה' wants him to follow יתרו's suggestion, even though it will probably lead to passage of incorrect judgments as a result of natural human error, rather than staying with his own approach, which would ensure that all judgments would be "Torah-true"? And by extension, how do we know that our system of מסורה, which is certainly liable to divergence from the אמת of what ה' wants from us, is in accordance with רצון ה', even though we may arrive at the wrong conclusion? What source can be found within the Torah itself for the idea that ה' is more concerned that there be a working system to transmit Torah and keep it alive among עם ישראל, even at the expense of pure truth and accuracy in פסק?

The first issue that needs to be discussed here is whether, in fact, our system of מסורה is liable to error. Perhaps our tradition is flawless, so that every פסק arrived at within the System is the one which would have been

offered by ה' Himself, had He been consulted! However, we know that is not the case, from sources within that very system. The most well known case is the story of the תנור של עכנאי, found in בבא מציעא נט. The גמרא here tells of a dispute between ר' יהושע, who represented the majority opinion and believed a certain oven was טמא, and ר' אליעזר, who disagreed and felt that the oven was טהור. The argument became so involved that ר' אליעזר attempted to prove his side by calling on God to perform miracles in his support, to the extent that a בת קול announced he was correct. Yet despite such clear proofs that ר' אליעזר was correct, they still ruled according to the majority opinion, because, as יהושע quoted in the name of ר' ירמיה, when the Torah says "לא בשמים (ל) (דברים ל) היא" (דברים ל), it attests to the fact that halachic rulings depend on the חכמים — not on a בת קול. Since it was an established rule among the חכמים that הלכה follows the majority, that was the decision, regardless of what ה' said. It seems clear from this גמרא that there certainly is a possibility of a case where we would decide against the preferred ruling of God, even in a case where we know it to be mistaken!

Another example of this phenomenon can be found in reference to the famous disputes between בית הלל and בית שמאי. The גמרא in עירובין יג: discusses why we generally follow בית הלל over בית שמאי, even though "אלו ואלו טעמים" because they showed respect for בית שמאי and even considered that opinion before rejecting it and offering their own. תוספות a few pages earlier (דף ו: ד"ה "כאן לאחר בת קול") explain that really, בית שמאי were sharper in their interpretations (i.e. closer to the correct פסק), which is why the גמרא has to explain why בית הלל were worthy of having the הלכה established according to them. In fact, there is an idea among the מקובלים (quoted by רב שלמה יוסף זיון in his book לאור ההלכה, page שט) that in the future, we will follow בית שמאי instead. These sources would seem to imply that בית שמאי is really correct, but because of some deficiency on our part (an inability to live with the ideal הלכה) and/or respect for the character of בית הלל, we follow a kind of "lesser truth" temporarily.

A third example of this idea is found in various cases throughout the Talmud: the concept of "לעקור דבר מן התורה". This phrase is used by תוספות in ברכות טז: (ד"ה "וחותם בברכת הארץ"), and the idea is found in other places as well. For example, the גמרא in יבמות ע-ע: discusses a situation in which the חכמים established a rule for קרבנות that involved going against an obligation from the Torah, as well as a ברייתא that says to violate one of the מצוות from the Torah. The גמרא does limit this ability of חז"ל to decree against a מצוה דאורייתא to cases such as שעת הדחק, but it still seems odd that anyone should have this power at all. How is it possible that we would be allowed to violate the express Word of God?!

These examples, and others, pose a fundamental problem. How can it be that we, the nation who claims to be constantly carrying the burden of minute details and measurements in הלכה *because* we want to discover and follow Truth, would be able to act against that Truth, justifying ourselves by saying the Truth simply doesn't fit within reality or that there is some other factor overriding the application of it?! Isn't it our goal, as Torah-observant Jews, to prove to the world that it is possible to live the way God wants in this world, that the Torah is always practicable, that a changing world does not mean a changing Law?! How can we possibly say that we would, knowingly or unknowingly, rule a certain way for some humanistic reason, even though ultimately ה' really wants something else?

It must be that there is another level to this explanation, that ה' purpose in giving us משה goes beyond simply having us follow the פסק He Himself would have given — in which case it would not be a violation of אמת no matter which halachic ruling our system of מסורה chooses, since in reality that is still part of the bigger picture of what ה' wants. What we must examine, then, is the question of how ה' does want us to determine and follow הלכה; for that, we turn to the Torah itself.

The פסוקים cited most often as a source for the extent of importance and authority given to the Rabbinic System in determining הלכה are found in "כי יפלא ממך דבר למשפט...ובאת אל הכהנים הלויים ואל השופט אשר: דברים יזה-יג יהיה בימים ההם ודרשת והגידו לך...ושמרת לעשות ככל אשר יורוך...לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאלי". While it is not necessarily obvious from a simple reading of these פסוקים that חז"ל have the extent of authority traditionally attributed to them, there is a more basic idea which is easily evident here that helps provide an answer to our question. It may not be clear directly from the פשט that, as רש"י says, we are to follow the חכמים even if they tell us something wrong ("אפי' הוא אומר לך על ימין שהוא שמאל ועל שמאל שהוא ימין") however, what is clear is that the Torah and its laws were given to a human body for interpretation and to be transmitted to the people through that body. This idea is found throughout Torah: it is up to us to set up not only a system of courts like any society would have, to deal with civil and criminal cases between people, but also to establish a system of Torah leadership (which may involve the same body, simply with an added role), to deal with teaching and determining judgments even in cases במקום בין אדם למקום.

Furthermore, there is evidence that not only was the Torah put in the hands of people, but that ה' arranged things that way deliberately, that this is specifically what He wanted. After every קריאת התורה, we look at the raised ישראל בני and proclaim "This is the Torah which משה placed before בני ישראל, on the command (lit. mouth) of ה', in the hand of משה." ה' could have given

us the entire Torah from His own “mouth”, and He could have sent נביאים in every generation to clarify anything we might still not be sure of in a given situation. In fact, we see in שמות יט that He did begin מתן תורה that way: He revealed Himself to the entire nation and told us at least the first two commandments Himself. Why did He not continue the teaching that way, instead of teaching it to משה to be transmitted “בד משה”?

Upon reading the פסוקים (כ:טו-יח), it seems that the reason He changed the method was because the people couldn’t handle hearing ה' directly. But while that was certainly the case, we can suggest that it was not the true reason ה' stopped this direct transmission: He never wanted to give the Torah that way in the first place. In שמות ט:ט, משה בעב: “הנה אנכי בא אליך בעב: משה בעב: הענן בעבור ישמע העם בדברי עמך וגם כך יאמינו לעולם” Why did ה' reveal Himself to the nation directly, so that they could hear what He was saying? Because He wanted them to believe in משה as His Messenger! The original goal was for the Torah to be given to the people through משה, through a person: the only reason ה' said even two commandments directly to בני ישראל was so they would see that He was behind משה and would therefore trust what משה taught them.

We said above that the reason משה thought he was the only one who could judge the people properly was perhaps because he believed a judge and teacher of Torah needed a direct link with ה' in order to answer correctly. What perhaps he didn’t understand until his conversation with יתרו was that ה' didn’t want him to necessarily come back and ask Him for the correct answers to the people’s questions. Rather, He chose משה to serve as the first step in a chain of *human* transmission of His Torah.

As ר' יהושע pointed out in גמרא בענין מעינתא, the Torah is not in Heaven. If we look to the section of דברים (ל:יא-יד) where this quote is found, the idea becomes even more clear (נפלאות היום לא נפלאות היום) — “כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוך היום לא נפלאות היום היא” — the commandments of ה' are not too difficult for us or too far above our comprehension to follow. “לא בשמים היא לאמר מי יעלה לנו” — the Torah is not in שמים or across the sea, so far out of our league that we would need to send someone like משה to get it for us, to learn what it means directly from ה' and then tell us what to do. Rather, how are we supposed to know what the Torah demands of us? “כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאוד בפיך ובלבבך לעשותו” — ה' gave the Torah over to us, in our world, so that it is close to us and belongs to our mouths and hearts: it is we who determine the way “לעשותו”, the proper way to follow the Torah in our world. Perhaps one day, when we are living in a different kind of world and are inherently closer to ה', we will change our rulings so that a stove which used to be unusable is now kosher, and begin to follow בית שמאי over

הלכה. But that will not be because of some newfound ability to keep the way ה' wants us to; rather, we, as the human keepers and interpreters of the Torah, will have changed and will therefore determine those הלכות differently. It is not that ה' wants the הלכה to be a certain way but we rule the other way because that's the best we can do in this world: He wants the הלכה to be whatever we determine it to be, which might be one thing now and something entirely different in the future. Both are רצון ה', as long as arrived at through the System; both can be "Truth" if properly determined as such.

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, in a discussion of the concept of "דעת תורה", quotes Robert Jackson, a former United States Supreme Court Justice, as saying that the Supreme Court is not the final decision-maker in American law because its members necessarily have the intelligence to make the right decisions; rather, the decisions made by the Supreme Court are correct retroactively, because of its status as final. The same can be said, in a different way, of our חכמים ה'. חכמים ה' put the Torah in human hands, and a human system of authority was developed — beginning with משה and the courts he set up — which established חיל as the final decision-makers. Although inherent in any human body is a possibility for "error", because this body has been made final, what they say is right — even if ה' Himself would have ruled differently had He been asked. There is, therefore, no such thing as an incorrect halachic ruling, so long as it is arrived at through the traditional structure of our human-based System.

We can now understand a common question asked regarding the exchange between יתרו and משה. Why did משה choose "אנשי חיל", limiting the qualifications required by his father-in-law's suggestion? For the purposes of our discussion, it is particularly significant that he left out the term "אנשי אמת". אמת יתרו wanted to suggest that it would be possible for these judges to arrive at Divine Truth even without the ability to consult with ה': they can still be אנשי אמת by virtue of their diligence, intelligence, or some other special quality. משה, however, realized that this is not possible. He still believed a system such as this would run a high risk of deviating from pure "Truth"; however, he now agreed with יתרו that it was necessary, and even desirable, anyway. The judges would not be אנשי אמת in the sense of being able to determine the הלכה the way ה' Himself would rule: however, so long as they are true אנשי חיל, with the strength and integrity to stay within the structure of Torah, then what they determine will retroactively be אמת in a larger sense. Their decisions will inherently be in accordance with רצון ה'.

This brings us to yet another question: Why would ה' set things up this way, so that Torah rests in the hands of mere humans, who may or may not arrive at the best conclusions? Doesn't He want us to follow His מצוות with

every last detail exactly as He originally intended? While it is impossible to be certain of the reasons behind anything ה' does, perhaps we can offer a possible explanation. According to the מדרש in מד' in מדרש רבה ה', בראשית רבה מד' in מדרש רבה ה', gave us מעוות not because every detail of every action we ever do necessarily has to be a certain way in order to maintain cosmic equilibrium, or for some other inherent purpose, but "לעזרף בהן את הבריות": so that we should be disciplined, always acting within a structure with God at its core. If we accept this concept, it becomes clear that it is not so important whether we rule that a given oven is טמא or טהור, or whether we follow בית הלל or בית שמאי. The bottom line is that ה' wants us to maintain the structure of Torah, so that we determine a ruling regarding every minute aspect of our lives and follow that ruling rigorously. Living within such a structure ensures that we are always aware of God and displays our readiness to adjust our behavior in order to please Him. While there may be deeper meanings behind various actions, ultimately, it is the greater concept behind the מעוות that He desires; not necessarily the specific הלכות themselves. We can see this expressed also if we read further in: בבא מציעא נט'. The גמרא relates that after this incident occurred, ר' נתן encountered אליהו הנביא and inquired about ה' reaction to what happened. אליהו replied that He smiled and said "בני נצחוני בני", which according to one interpretation means "My children have made me eternal". The true goal in our observance of מעוות is to involve ourselves with Torah so that ה' will be eternalized; whether this goal is arrived at by declaring an oven טמא or טהור is virtually irrelevant on the larger scale, so long as we reach our decision in accordance with the traditional structure and System of Torah, and so long as we follow to the letter whatever decision has been reached.

קדשים תהיו

Nina Hochman

"דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם" (ויקרא יט:ב). The phrase "קדשים תהיו" can be translated in two different ways; it is either a command (i.e. "you shall be holy"), or it is a consequence, a mere fact (i.e. "you will be holy"). In either case it is clear that בני ultimately have no choice; in some way, they must be holy. In שמות יט:ו, בני is called a "קדוש" וגוי קדוש. Holiness is found within every Jew because within every נשמה lies the קדושה of ה'. All people were created in God's image and are expected to conduct their daily lives with that in mind. (R' Hirsch)

Understanding that we are commanded to be "holy" is relatively simple. The מפרשים struggle, however, with much more difficult questions — how to define and achieve that holiness. In order to address these issues, it is necessary to first understand the פסוק more deeply.

What does "קדשים תהיו" actually command? רש"י says that it means to be עריות מן העריות, separating from immoral acts. רש"י quotes ויקרא רבה כד:ה which matches up each of the עשרת הדברות to פסוקים in this פרק. Each has a parallel except for לא תנאף, the prohibition of adultery. Therefore, רש"י says, "קדשים תהיו" must be dealing with separating from עריות and thus it corresponds to לא תנאף. רש"י supports his addition to the מדרש by quoting עריות which connect קדושה and פסוקים:

"ויקרא כא:ז) "אשה זונה וחללה...כי קדוש הוא לאלקיו"

"ויקרא כא:טו) "ולא יחלל זרעו בעמיו כי אני ה' מקדשו"

"(שמות כח:מא-מב) "...ומלאת את ידם וקדשת אתם...לכסות בשר ערוה".

It is interesting to note that a זונה, a prostitute, is also called a קדישה; this use of the root ק.ד.ש. reveals euphemistically the connection between ערוה and קדושה. רמח"ל in מסילת ישרים supports רש"י and says that one should separate himself in order to stay away from עבירות.

רמב"ן, too, interprets "קדשים תהיו" as a separation. Unlike רש"י, though,

רמב"ן does limit the command to עריות; he warns against becoming a "נבל ברשות התורה" — a person who follows the letter of the law but ignores its spirit. רמב"ן questions רש"י's definition of קדשים תהיו as separation from עריות because the איסורים of עריות were discussed in the preceding פרשה. Therefore, the רמב"ן says, this פסוק must be referring to something more general. רמב"ן states "קדש עומך במותר לך": achieve holiness in the realm of that which is permitted to you. רמב"ן says the תורה permits sexual relations, eating meat, and drinking wine, but there are boundaries and limits to all pleasures in this world. קדשים תהיו is a warning to be sufficiently separate so as not to become gluttons within these permitted pleasures. This understanding of the word קדוש is seen in relation to נזיר, who is called קדוש when he separates from certain pleasures.

ספורנו defines קדשים תהיו as a command to emulate God. He cites a פסוק in בראשית of פרק א' — "נעשה אדם בצלמינו כדמותנו": because man was created in God's image, he is expected to attempt to emulate His ways. One emulates God, according to ספורנו, by observing His מעוות.

This מחלוקת between רמב"ן, רש"י, and ספורנו is the key to understanding this entire topic. In fact, we shall demonstrate that there is really no מחלוקת at all; all three פרשנים are actually expressing different means towards one goal. Before these פירושים can be understood on a higher level, though, it is necessary to first address other issues that arise with an in-depth analysis of this פרק.

ספורנו states: "קדשים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם". A more grammatically correct phrasing would have been "כי אני קדוש". One does not say אני גדול, rather אני גדול. Why deviate from standard sentence structure in this פסוק?

ספורנו concludes with the phrase "אני ה' אלקיכם", used here for the first of many times throughout the פרק. At the end of פסוק י"ב the phrase "אני ה'" is also stated for the first of many times in this פרק. Each of these phrases is repeated eight times throughout the פרק. Two other phrases, "את שבתתי תשמרו" and "לא תעשו עול במשפט", also appear twice each in this פרק. Why is there so much repetition?

R' Hirsch answers why the first פסוק says "כי קדוש אני" instead of כי אני קדוש. He says that within the phrase "כי קדוש אני" lies the source of our ability to achieve קדושה. The phrase should be read as one unit: "כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם". קדושה is the essence of "אני ה'", "אלקיכם" is the One who provides the strength and ability to achieve קדושה. This פסוק calls attention to the fact that everything comes from ה' and that everything He provides is really a gift that must be used properly. R' Hirsch adds that קדשים, when referring to בניי, is spelled חסר — without the "ו", and כי קדוש אני, referring to ה', is written מלא — with the "ו". Since בניי can never reach the same level of קדושה, the word

הקב"ה and בני" is written חסר to point out the gap between קדשים

A Jew's goal is to reach a superior level of קדושה, which the מדרש learns from the phrases *אני ה' אלקיכם* and *אני ה' אלהיכם*. Each of these phrases is repeated eight times throughout this פרק; eight signifies a level that is למעלה מן הטבע, superceding the laws of nature. Because these phrases appear at the end of each commandment, they serve as reminders that Jews should be emulating ה' as they follow His laws, as ספורנו explained in his definition of תהיו קדשים. R' Hirsch says that Jews are called ה' people, the עם סגולה. The holiness of His Name depends on the way a Jew conducts himself: his manners, morals, and general way of life. "אבא שאול אומר פמליא למלך ומה עליה להיות מחקה למלך" (תורת כוהנים) — the surroundings of a king have to be stamped with the manners of the king. This idea also follows ספורנו's interpretation of the פרק.

רש"י disagrees with this approach, preferring to explain the phrases "אני ה' אלקיכם" and "אני ה' אלהיכם" as being reminders that ה' is always present, watching each person's actions and knowing everyone's thoughts. In שמות ו', when these phrases appear for the first time in the תורה, רש"י says that they serve as reminders. There however, unlike in ויקרא, they suggest that ה' is faithful to punish those deserving punishment and to reward those deserving reward. רש"י's two definitions are complementary. ה' knowledge of each person's actions and thoughts allows him to mete out punishment and reward justly.

The second, third, and fourth פסוקים all end with "אני ה' אלקיכם". These פסוקים deal with aspects of daily life: כבוד אב ואם, שמירת שבת, and כבוד אב ואם. This shows that it is incumbent upon every Jew to incorporate קדושה into his daily life.

One final purpose of the phrase "אני ה' אלקיכם" is to teach that ה' is the God of Jews at all levels and at all times. This is derived from the fact that "אני ה' אלקיכם" follows the words "ואלהי מכה לא תעשו" at the end of פסוק ד'. He is the God of those who keep His commandments — "איש אמו ואביו תראו" — and even God of those who abandon their relationship with Him and shirk the responsibility of the מצות — "ואלהי מכה לא תעשו".

The remaining question also deals with repetition. "את שבתתי תשמרו" and "לא תעשו עול ומשפט" are each stated twice. The "את שבתתי תשמרו" in פסוק ג' teaches that keeping שבת overrides the מצוה of honoring one's parents (רש"י). The fact that it repeats in פסוק ל' teaches the איסור of doing the מלאכות of the מקדש. The "לא תעשו עול ומשפט" in פסוק טו refers to judging righteously with regard to law. The repetition in פסוק לה refers to judging righteously with regard to weighing and measuring. While the repetition of "את שבתתי תשמרו" emphasizes למקום אדם בין אדם, the repetition of "לא תעשו עול ומשפט" emphasizes לחבירו אדם בין אדם. This further explains why this פרק was said בהקהל; it was important for everyone to acquire the necessary tools required to lead a life of קדושה.

In "דבר אל כל עדת בניי" that derive from the words מפרשים, פסוק ב' יט was said בהקהל. There is only one other time in the תורה where this לשון is used: in שמות יבג: where the תורה discusses פסח. What do קדשים and קרבן פסח have in common? These two issues apply to all of בניי: men, women, and children. They all heard these commandments together, directly from משה, so that no one could later question these important מצוות (R' Hirsch). רש"י comments that this פרק is said בהקהל because a majority of the תורה depends on it. Whichever approach is correct, both רש"י and R' Hirsch emphasize that the commandments given in these פרקים, פסח, קרבן פסח, קדשים תהיו and רש"י's assertion that "a majority of the תורה depends on it", however, is dubious. Of 613 מצוות, only 51 appear in פרשת קדשים — certainly not a majority! What, then, does רש"י mean when he says "מפני שרוב גופי התורה תלוין בה" R' Moshe Feinstein suggests that "תלוין בה" is not a reference to the פרק, rather to the מצוות קדשים תהיו ציוי. רש"י now makes sense; a majority of the תורה is dependent on being קדוש. This explanation is also consistent with ספורנו's approach to קדשים תהיו.

Most of the resolutions to the problems that arise in this פרק are compatible with ספורנו's definition of קדשים תהיו, which is that it is a command to emulate ה' by following His מצוות. A deeper examination of רש"י and רמב"ן reveals that they, too, agree with ספורנו.

He explains "ממלכת כוהנים וגוי קדוש" comments on the words רמב"ן in שמות יט: "גוי קדוש" as being a nation that cleaves to ה' and then says, "כמו שאמר קדשים תהיו". Because רמב"ן connects the two concepts, it is clear that he really does feel that in order to be close to ה', one must be קדוש, and in turn, those who are קדוש are close to ה'.

רמח"ל, like גור אריה, says that separation from עריות means staying away from the enumerated עבירות in this parsha. This implies that strict adherence to the laws of "קדשים תהיו" (as detailed in פרק יט) is required in order to be "פרושים מן העריות" — as רש"י defined קדשים תהיו. This is a cycle; the מצוות of this פרק help one to be פרוש מן העריות which in turn leads him to be קדוש and close to ה'.

Thus, רש"י and רמב"ן's definitions of "קדשים תהיו" are not really different. פרישות, of any kind, whether from עריות or from ברשות התורה, leads to קדושה. This separation from "bad" places a greater emphasis on observing the מצוות and learning to love ה', all while achieving this level of קדושה. Essentially, this is what ספורנו was saying. Emulating ה' can only come from keeping מצוות, and man can only keep the מצוות after he has separated himself from עבירות.

The אמר ר' פינחס בן יאיר...פרישות מביאה לידי (עבודה זרה כ:): גמרא

"קדושה...יראת חטא מביאה לידי קדושה" is a step towards קדושה and ultimately, as the גמרא continues, "קדושה מביאה לידי רוח הקודש". קדושה leads to development of a closer connection to הקב"ה.

Clearly, the only way the command of תהיו קדשים can be achieved is through a process which begins by realizing what is immoral and gluttonous. Once a person understands this, he can separate himself from it and reach closeness with ה'. This process is a fundamental part of living as a Jew and therefore necessary for each individual to hear. This allowed each person, on his own level, to take the first step on his individual ladder of following מצות, and eventually reach the ultimate goal of closeness to ה'.