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## פרשת לך לך

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פרק טו פסוק ח

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה בְּמָה אֲדַע כִּי אֵי־שָׁנָה:

חז"ל

מיום שֶׁבָּרָא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הָעוֹלָם, לֹא הָיָה אָדָם שֶׁקָּרָא לְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֲדֹנָי, עַד שֶׁבָּא אַבְרָהָם וּקְרָא אֲדֹנָי, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יי בְּמָה אֲדַע כִּי אֵי־שָׁנָה". (ברכות ז:)

מושג

לֹא הָיָה אָדָם שֶׁקָּרָא לְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֲדֹנָי, עַד שֶׁבָּא אַבְרָהָם וּקְרָא אֲדֹנָי.

### Translation:

No one had ever called Hashem by the name אדון (my master) until אברהם came and called him אדון.

### Explanation:

This Musag comes to highlight the fact that Avrohom's belief in G-d was unique in that he was the first to believe that Hashem possessed complete mastery over nature. Even among those who believed that Hashem had created the world, many thought that Hashem set the laws of nature but did not interfere with them, as He did not concern Himself with the lives of man. Avrohom believed that Hashem could change nature at will, which would allow Him to provide Avrohom with a child or give the land of Israel to whomever He saw fit. This power is what Avrohom referred to when he called Hashem <sup>1</sup>אדון.

### Looking in the Pasuk:

The Chazal from which this Musag is taken is relating to the fact that until now no one in the Torah had called Hashem by the name Adon<sup>2</sup>. In the first 8 Pesukim of this Perek, Avrohom uses the name twice, both by Hashem's promise of giving him a son and by the promise to give the Jewish people the land of Israel as an inheritance. The fact that Avrohom used the name in addition to the name י-הוה certainly teaches us that Avrohom was trying to refer to Hashem in a new and unique way.

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<sup>1</sup> See note #1

<sup>2</sup> See note #2

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## NOTES

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1. To best understand the meaning behind the usage of the name אדני, we must first try and understand what Avrohom was asking when he said במה אדע. There are two opinions found in Chazal. The first is that Avrohom was not challenging G-d and asking for proof of Hashem's promise, rather he was simply trying to understand on what basis Hashem would grant this promise. This approach is found in the Midrash Rabba:

ויאמר ה' א-להים במה אדע ר' חייא ברבי חנינא אמר לא כקורא תגר אלא אמר לו באיזו זכות and in the Gemoroh (תענית כז:) as well:

ויאמר ה' א-להים במה אדע כי אירשנה אמר אברהם רבש"ע שמא ישראל חוטאין לפניך אתה עושה להם כדור המבול וכדור הפלגה א"ל לאו, אמר לפניו רבש"ע הודיעני במה אירשנה א"ל קחה לי עגלה משולשת ועז משולשת וגו', אמר לפניו רבש"ע תינה בזמן שבית המקדש קיים בזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים מה תהא עליהם? אמר לו כבר תקנתי להם סדר קרבנות בזמן שקוראין בהן לפני מעלה אני עליהם כאילו הקריבום לפני ואני מוחל להם על כל עונותיהם.

A second approach is that Avrohom is asking G-d for a sign to prove His promise will be fulfilled. which states: (נדריים לב.) This opinion is found in the Gemoroh

מפני מה נענש אברהם אבינו ונשתעבדו בניו למצרים מאתים ועשר שנים מפני שעשה אנגרייא (שהוליכן למלחמה) בתלמידי חכמים שנאמר וירק את חניכיו ילידי ביתו, ושמואל אמר מפני שהפריז (שהגדיל לשאול) על מדותיו של הקב"ה שנא' במה אדע כי אירשנה.

These two opinions are found in Rashi (פסוק ו).

והאמין בה'. לא שאל לו אות על זאת, אבל על ירשת הארץ שאל לו אות ואמר לו במה אדע: ויחשבה לו צדקה. הקדוש ברוך הוא חשבה לאברם לזכות ולצדקה על האמונה שהאמין בו. דבר אחר במה אדע, לא שאל לו אות אלא אמר לפניו הודיעני באיזה זכות יתקומו בה, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא בזכות הקרבנות.

Rashi begins by bringing the opinion of שמואל that Avrohom was challenging G-d for a sign to prove His intent to fulfill His promise. This opinion, continues Rashi, seems extremely problematic. For in the previous Pesukim Avrohom is praised for his trust in G-d, as he did not ask for a sign. How is it possible that the very next Pasuk should tell us of Avrohom questioning the same G-d in which he blindly believed? When we take into account the fact that the first set of Pesukim did not actually take place before the latter Pesukim (see following note) but rather three years later, it becomes clear that the Torah placed the stories together for a very specific purpose. The Torah first told us of Avrohom's perfect trust in Hashem's promise to give him a son, even though it had not yet happened, so that we would understand that in the next story of ברית בין הבתרים, Avrohom is not questioning G-d as a simple reading of the text might infer. Rather, Rashi concludes, there is a different explanation of Avrohom's words that is consistent with his complete trust in Hashem. Avrohom here too is not asking for a sign, just as he did not ask for one in the previous Pesukim: rather he wants to know באיזה זכות יתקיימו בה, in what merit they will *remain* in the land.

According to Rashi's understanding of Avrohom's question<sup>3</sup>, we can now understand why Avrohom asks this question only by the promise of Eretz Yisroel and not by the promise of being given a son. For he knows that Hashem has unlimited power and is indeed the master of the Universe, אדון כל הארץ. Hashem can easily provide him with a son and give the Jewish people the land of Israel, for Hashem has full mastery over the natural world<sup>4</sup>. This is the אדון that is the common factor in both promises. However, in order to remain in Eretz Yisroel the Jews will have to live lives consistent with the holiness of the land. Therefore, Avrohom wonders what will happen when the Jews sin? How will they merit remaining in the land<sup>5</sup>?

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<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that the idea of explaining Avrohom's question as in what merit will they *remain* in the land is Rashi's novel explanation.

<sup>4</sup> The idea that the name of אדני refers to Hashem's power over the natural world is taken from the מהרש"א (ד"ה עד שבא) אברהם הוסיף וקראו גם בשם אדון שהוא מורה על אמנותו ויכולתו לשנות הגזירות ומערכת השמים.

<sup>5</sup> Until now Avrohom had been told that Eretz Yisroel was to be given as a gift to him and his descendants, לך אתן את הארץ. However now for the first time Hashem called this gift a ירושה, inferring a more lasting and permanent tie to the land. (לרשתה: כדי שהבנים ירשוה ממך בתורת ירושה שאין לה הפסק). Therefore, Avrohom wonders, as Rashi explains, by what merit will the Jewish people be able to *remain* in the land if they sin. This is inferred from

Therefore, the Torah connects the question of **במה אדע** to Avrohom's future request for a son, and highlights the usage of a new name for G-d, in order that we might correctly understand the nature of Avrohom's question. Thus, the way to read the Pasuk is that Avrohom is saying even though I understand that Hashem is **אדון**, and therefore I do not need an **אות** for proof that Eretz Yisroel is to be gifted to the Jewish people, I still need to know how they will be able to hold on to the land as a **ירושה**, as they might sin. To this Hashem answers that they will have the **קרבנות** and Tefilah to atone for their sins.

2. The obvious question is that this is not the first time that Avrohom had used the name Adon. Previously, in **פסוק ב**, Avrohom had already used the exact same terminology, **ויאמר אברם א-דני י-הוה**, **מה תתן לי**. Why then does the **גמרא** from which our Musag is taken call our Pasuk, **פסוק ה**, the first time Avrohom used this name? The **תוספות**<sup>6</sup> answer by proving that the Pesukim at the beginning of the Perek, in which Avrohom asks for a son, actually happened three years after the Pesukim of the **ברית בין הבתרים**. (This follows the concept of **מאחר בתורה** and **מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה**, that the Torah is not necessarily written in chronological order.) Therefore Avrohom's usage of the name Adon in **פסוק ה** was the first time the name was mentioned. Of course this begs the question: Why would the Torah place the two incidents, asking for a son and **ברית בין הבתרים**, one following the other, if they did not take place at the same time, and why place them in reverse order?

### 3. Questions for Further Thought:

- a. In the **ברית בין הבתרים** Hashem informs Avrohom that **קרבנות** and **תפילה** will be the merit that will allow the Jews to remain in **ארץ ישראל** should they sin. Why do you think Hashem felt it was necessary to tell Avrohom of the Egyptian slavery at this point?
- b. The only other time Avrohom uses the term of **אדוני**<sup>7</sup> is when he prays for Sdom. Why do you think it was fitting to use this name of Hashem in those prayers? (And, the only other person to use this name of Hashem in **ספר בראשית** is **אבימלך** (כ:ד). Why do you think he used this name?)

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Avrohom's question, **במה אדע כי אירשנה**. Also see R.S.R. Hirsch for a different explanation on why the change from **מתנה** to **ירושה** caused Avrohom to ask **במה אדע**.

<sup>6</sup> **ברכות ז: ד"ה לא היה אדם**

<sup>7</sup> **קדוש** there is **אדון** which is a subject of debate whether the **יהי**.