

## Lot: "Second Best, Eternally Overshadowed"

Global Day of Jewish Learning November 16th, 2014

Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses, Kehilat Romemu

Romemu.org

### Source Sheet

#### I. The Question of Empathizing with Lot

From the Bat Mitzvah Drash of Shira Cohler-Esses (delivered on 11/12/2014 at Minyan Maat, Ansche Chesed)

"I found myself wondering how Lot felt when he was traveling with him. Did he feel like a sidekick when he was traveling with the man who was chosen by God?.....Although I looked, I came across nothing [in the tradition] that was sympathetic to Lot or that would help us understand him."

#### II. Lot's Father

Genesis 11

28. And Haran died during the lifetime of Terah his father in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees.

Now Haran was standing there undecided. If Abram is victorious, [thought he], I will say that I am of Abram's belief, while if Nimrod is victorious I will say that I am on Nimrod's side. When Abram descended into the fiery furnace and was saved, he [Nimrod] asked him, 'Of whose belief are you?' 'Of Abram's,' he replied. Thereupon he seized and cast him into the fire; his inwards were scorched and he died in his father's presence. Hence it is written, "And Haran died in the presence of ('al pene) his father Terach" (Gen 11:28).

כח. וימת הרן על פני תרח אביו בארץ  
מולדתו באור כשדים:

מר לו: מילין את משתעיא אני, אני  
משתחוה אלא לאור, הרי אני משליכך  
בתוכו, ויבא אלוה שאתה משתחוה לו  
ויצילך הימנו. הוה תמן. הרן קאים  
פלוג, אמר: מה נפשך, אם נצח  
אברהם, אנא אמר: מן דאברהם אנא,  
ואם נצח נמרוד, אנא אמר: דנמרוד  
אנא. כיון שירד אברהם לכבשן האש  
וניצול, אמרין ליה: דמאן את? אמר  
להון: מן אברהם אנא. נטלוהו  
והשליכוהו לאור ונחמרו בני מעיו ויצא  
ומת על פני תרח אביו, הה"ד (שם  
יב) וימת הרן על פני תרח וגו':

#### III. Lot goes with Abram

Genesis 12:4-5:

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וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וַאֲבָרָם בְּיַחְמֹשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן: וַיֵּקַח אַבְרָם אֶת־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בְּרֹאֲמֹהוּ וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עִשׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ: לְלֶכֶת אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן:

So Abram went, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

### IV. Lot and Abram Separate

Genesis 13

(א) וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הַגִּגְיָה: (ב) וַאֲבָרָם כָּבֵד מְאֹד בַּמִּקְנֵהוּ בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב: (ג) וַיֵּלֶךְ לְמִסְעָיו מִנֶּגֶב וְעַד־בֵּית־אֵל עַד־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה שֵׁם אֱהֱלָה בְּתַחֲלָה בֵּין בֵּית־אֵל וּבֵין הָעֵי: (ד) אֶל־מְקוֹם הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שָׁם בְּרֵאשִׁיטָה וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה: (ה) וְגַם־לָלוֹט הִתְלַךְ אֶת־אַבְרָם הָיָה צֹאן־וּבָקָר וְאֵהֳלִים: (ו) וְלֹא־נָשָׂא אֶתֶם הָאָרֶץ לְשִׁבְתָּ יַחְדָּו כִּי־הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְשִׁבְתָּ יַחְדָּו: (ז) וַיְהִי־רִיב בֵּין רַעֲיֵי מִקְנֵה־אַבְרָם וּבֵין רַעֲיֵי מִקְנֵה־לוֹט וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אִזּוּ יָשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ: (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־לוֹט אַל־נָא תְהִי מְרִיבָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶיךָ וּבֵין רַעֲיֵי וּבֵין רַעֲיֵי כִּי־אֲנָשִׁים אַחִים אֲנַחְנוּ: (ט) הֲלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ הִפְרָד גַּם מֵעַלִי אִם־הִשְׁמָאל וְאִמְנָה וְאִם־הַיְמִין וְאֲשַׁמְאִלָּה: (י) וַיִּשָּׂא־לוֹט אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־כָּל־כְּפַר הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כָלָה מִשְׁקָה לְפָנָיו שַׁחַת יְהוָה אֶת־סֹדֶם וְאֶת־עַמֹּרָה כְּגַן־יְהוָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֵכָה צֶעַר: (יא) וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ לוֹט אֶת כָּל־כְּפַר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּפְרְדּוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו: (יב) אַבְרָם יָשֵׁב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וְלוֹט יָשֵׁב בְּעַרֵי הַכְּזָר וַיֵּאֱהָל עַד־סֹדֶם: (יג) וְאֲנָשֵׁי סֹדֶם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מֵאֵד: (יד) וַיְהִי־הָ אָמַר אֶל־אַבְרָם אַחֲרֵי הַפְּרֹד־לוֹט מֵעַמּוֹ שֶׁאֵין גַּם עֵינֶיךָ וְרָאָה מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה שֵׁם צְפֹנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְקִדְמָה וַיֹּמַר: (טו) כִּי אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה רָאָה לִּי אֶתְנַנֶּה וְלִזְרַעַךָ עַד־עוֹלָם:

(1) And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South. (2) And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. (3) And he went on his journeys from the South even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Ai; (4) unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first; and Abram called there on the name of the LORD. (5) And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. (6) And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together; for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. (7) And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. (8) And Abram said unto Lot: 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren.

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(9) Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left.' (10) And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar. (11) So Lot chose him all the plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east; and they separated themselves the one from the other. (12) Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. (13) Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against the LORD exceedingly. (14) And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him: 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; (15) for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. (16) And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. (17) Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it.' (18) And Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the terebinths of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Rashi:

Genesis 13:10

as you come to Zoar. Until Zoar. And the Midrash Aggadah interprets it unfavorably: it was because they were lascivious that Lot chose their region for himself (Tractate Horioth 10b).

באכה צער. עד צער. ומדרש אגדה דורשה לגנאי, על שהיו שטופי זמה בחר לו לוט בשכונתם במסכת הוריות (י ב):

Genesis 13: 11

from the east: He traveled from beside Abram and went away to the west of Abram; hence, he travelled from east to west (Targum Jonathan). According to the Midrash Aggadah (Gen. Rabbah 41:7), he distanced himself from the Ancient One (מקדמונו) of the world. He said, "I care neither for Abram nor for his God."

מקדם: נסע מאצל אברם והלך לו למערבו של אברם, נמצא נוסע ממזרח למערב. ומדרש אגדה הסיע עצמו מקדמונו של עולם אמר אי אפשי לא באברם ולא באלהיו:

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### V. Giving Voice to the Un-chosen:

*"Least loved, by the mother who craved a daughter.....Least loved now by the girl who prefers your friend, Second best always. eternally overshadowed."*

*"Who could look at you, who would ever look at you beside Harry Potter? What have you ever done, compared with the chosen one? What are you, compared with the Boy Who Lived"?*

*J.K. Rowling, The Deathly Hallows, Chapter 19.108-110*

Genesis 27:38:

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו אֶל-אָבִיו הַבְּרִכָּה אִתָּךְ הוּא-לְךָ אָבִי בְּרַכְנִי גַם-אֲנִי אָבִי וְיִשָּׂא עֵשָׂו קִלְוֹ וַיְבָרֵךְ:

And Esau said unto his father: 'Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father.' And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.