

Fill Your Own Cup 5786
Fall Series – Session Three – Making Souls

Lech Lecha, by Rick Lupert. October 24, 2015

<https://jewishpoetry.net/lech-lecha/>

Consider the very first Jew – *Abraham*.
Not even his name when the whole thing started.
Had a reputation. The kind of kid
who would destroy the family business.
out of principle. Married the first nice Jewish girl.
Neither of them actually Jewish
when the whole thing started.
The very first converts. Broken idols
noticed by the One who would not be idolized.
The One who gave them the deal of a lifetime.
Go to the shown place. Pack up everything.
No one likes to move. Something's going to get broken.
Something's going to get lost.
But consider what was gained.
Longer names...holier names...
and a bloodline long enough
to see the whole world still trying
to get to the shown place.
I'd like to trade all my possessions
for the Hebrew letter hey.
Pick up extra work as a star in the sky
promised to an ancient ancestor.
That deal you made, Father Abraham.
The ink's still drying.
I'm a grain of sand.

1) Genesis 12:1-5

1) God said to Avram, "*Lech Lecha* - Go forth from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you.
2) I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you; I will make your name great, And you shall be a blessing.
3) I will bless those who bless you And curse the one that curses you; And all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you."
4) Avram went forth as God had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.
5) Avram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, **and the persons that they made in Haran**; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan.

בראשית יב:א-ה

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ
מֵאֶרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹרְאָךְ׃
ב וְאָנֹכִי לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכָךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְךָ
שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה׃
ג וְאַבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶאָר
וְנִבְרָכוּ בְךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפְחוֹת הָאָדָמָה׃
ד וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כָּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה
וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בְּרַחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים
וּשְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה בָּצְאוּ מִחָרָן׃
ה וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־שָׂרִי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־
לוֹט בְּרֵאֲחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־רִכּוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר
רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן
וַיָּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרְצָה
כְּנָעַן׃

2) Bereshit Rabbah 39:14

"And the people that they had made in Haran" – Rabbi Elazar bar Zimra said: If all the inhabitants of the world were to assemble, to create even a single gnat, they would be unable to inject a soul into it, and yet you say: "The people that they had made?" The explanation is that this refers to the converts that they converted.

If so, [it should have said] "that they converted"; why "that they made"? It is to teach you that anyone who draws an idol worshipper near and converts him, it is as though he has created him.

Let it, then, say: "that he made"? Rav Huna said: Abraham converted the men and Sarah converted the women.

בראשית רבה לט:יד

וְאֵת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן (בראשית יב, ה), אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בַּר זִמְרָא אִם מִתְּפַנְסִין כָּל בְּאֵי הָעוֹלָם לְבָרָא אֶפְלוּ יִתּוּשׁ אֶחָד אֵינָן יְכוּלִין לְזַרְק בּוֹ נִשְׁמָה, וְאֵת אָמַר וְאֵת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ, אֵלֹא אֵלֹו הַגֵּרִים שְׂגִירוֹ, וְאִם כֵּן שְׂגִירוֹ לָמָּה אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ, אֵלֹא לְלַמֶּדֶד שֶׁכָּל מִי שֶׁהוּא מְקָרֵב אֶת הָעוֹבֵד כּוֹכָבִים וּמִגִּירוֹ כְּאֵלֹו בְּרָאוֹ. וְאִמַּר אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, לָמָּה נֶאֱמַר אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ, אָמַר רַב הוּנָא אֲבָרְהָם הֵיךְ מִגִּיר אֶת הָאֲנָשִׁים וְשָׂרָה מִגִּירָת אֶת הַנָּשִׁים.

3) Rashi Genesis 1:5

The Souls that they had Made in Haran – The souls which he had brought beneath the sheltering wings of the Shechinah (Divine presence.) Avraham converted the men and Sarah converted the women and Scripture speaks of them as if they (Abraham and Sara) had made them.

However, the simplest understanding of the text is that it refers to the men-servants and to the maidservants whom they had acquired for themselves. The word "עשה" is used here as (in Genesis 31:1), "he has acquired (עשה) all this wealth", and (Numbers 24:8), "And Israel acquires (עושה) wealth" – an expression for acquiring and amassing.

רש"י שם פסוק ה

אשר עשו בחרן. שֶׁהִכְנִיסָן תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה; אֲבָרְהָם מִגִּיר אֶת הָאֲנָשִׁים וְשָׂרָה מִגִּירָת הַנָּשִׁים, וּמַעֲלָה עֲלֵיהֶם הַכְּתוּב כְּאֵלֹו עָשָׂאוֹם; וּפְשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל מְקָרָא עֲבָדִים וּשְׁפָחוֹת שֶׁקֵּנוּ לָהֶם, כְּמוֹ עָשָׂה אֶת כָּל הַכֶּבֶד הַזֶּה (שם ל"א), וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל עָשָׂה חֵיל (במדבר כד יח), לְשׁוֹן קוּנָה וְכוּנָס:

4) Babylonian Talmud Tracate Sanhedrin 99b

Reish Lakish said: With regard to anyone who teaches Torah to the child of another, the verse ascribes him credit as though he formed that student, as it is stated: "And Abram took Sarai his wife...and the souls that they formed in Haran" (Genesis 12:5).

Rabbi Elazar says: It is as though he fashioned [asa'an] the words of Torah themselves, as it is stated: "Observe the words of this covenant, *va'asitem otam*" (Deuteronomy 29:8), indicating that studying the Torah is like fashioning it.

Rava says: It is as though he fashioned himself, as it is stated: "*Va'asitem otam*." Do not read "*va'asitem otam*" as: And you shall fashion them; rather, read it as *va'asitem atem*, meaning: You shall fashion yourself.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין

צט:

אמר ריש לקיש כל המלמד את בן חברו תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו עשאו שנאמר (בראשית יב, ה) ואת הנפש אשר עשו בחרן ר' (אליעזר) אומר כאילו עשאו לדברי תורה שנאמר (דברים כט, ח) ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת ועשיתם אותם רבא אמר כאילו עשאו לעצמו שנאמר ועשיתם אותם אל תקרי אותם אלא אתם