בס"ד
Fill Your Own Cup – Year Four
Midrash – Session Three
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Fill Your Own Cup – Fall Series – Reading the Parsha Through the Eyes of the Midrash

Session Three – Lech Lecha

1) Robert Frost, Mending Wall, North of Boston (1914)

He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.'

2) Genesis 13:1 – 14

1) From Egypt, Abram went up into the Negeb, with his wife and all that he possessed, together with Lot.
2) Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold.
3) And he proceeded by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been formerly, between Bethel and Ai,
4) the site of the altar that he had built there at first; and there Abram invoked God by name.
5) Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents,
6) so that the land could not support them staying together; for their possessions were so great that they could not remain together.
7) **And there was quarreling between the herders of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle**.—The Canaanites and Perizzites were then dwelling in the land.—
8) Abram said to Lot, **"Let there be no strife between you and me, between my herders and yours, for we are, after all, brothers.**
9) Is not the whole land before you? **Let us separate**: if you go north, I will go south; and if you go south, I will go north."
10) Lot looked about him and saw how well watered was the whole plain of the Jordan, all of it—this was before God had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—all the way to Zoar, like the garden of God, like the land of Egypt.
11) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan**, and Lot journeyed eastward.** Thus they parted from each other;
12) Abram remained in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the Plain, pitching his tents near Sodom.
13) Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against God.
14) **And God said to Abram, after Lot had parted from him**, "Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west,

בראשית יג:א – יד

א) וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל־
אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הַנֶּגְבָּה׃
ב) וְאַבְרָם כָּבֵד מְאֹד בַּמִּקְנֶה בַּכֶּסֶף וּבַזָּהָב׃
ג) וַיֵּלֶךְ לְמַסָּעָיו מִנֶּגֶב וְעַד־בֵּית־אֵל עַד־הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה שָׁם אָהֳלֹה בַּתְּחִלָּה בֵּין בֵּית־אֵל וּבֵין
הָעָי׃
ד) אֶל־מְקוֹם הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה שָׁם בָּרִאשֹׁנָה
וַיִּקְרָא שָׁם אַבְרָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה׃
ה) וְגַם־לְלוֹט הַהֹלֵךְ אֶת־אַבְרָם הָיָה צֹאן־וּבָקָר
וְאֹהָלִים׃
ו) וְלֹא־נָשָׂא אֹתָם הָאָרֶץ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו כִּי־הָיָה
רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לָשֶׁבֶת יַחְדָּו׃
ז) וַיְהִי־רִיב בֵּין רֹעֵי מִקְנֵה־אַבְרָם וּבֵין רֹעֵי
מִקְנֵה־לוֹט וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אָז יֹשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ׃
ח) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל־לוֹט אַל־נָא תְהִי מְרִיבָה
בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וּבֵין רֹעַי וּבֵין רֹעֶיךָ כִּי־אֲנָשִׁים
אַחִים אֲנָחְנוּ׃
ט) הֲלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ הִפָּרֶד נָא מֵעָלָי אִם־
הַשְּׂמֹאל וְאֵימָנָה וְאִם־הַיָּמִין וְאַשְׂמְאִילָה׃
י) וַיִּשָּׂא־לוֹט אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת־כָּל־כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן
כִּי כֻלָּהּ מַשְׁקֶה לִפְנֵי׀ שַׁחֵת יְהוָה אֶת־סְדֹם
וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה כְּגַן־יְהוָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בֹּאֲכָה
צֹעַר׃
יא) וַיִּבְחַר־לוֹ לוֹט אֵת כָּל־כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע
לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּפָּרְדוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו׃
יב) אַבְרָם יָשַׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־כְּנָעַן וְלוֹט יָשַׁב בְּעָרֵי
הַכִּכָּר וַיֶּאֱהַל עַד־סְדֹם׃
יג) וְאַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מְאֹד׃
יד) וַיהוָה אָמַר אֶל־אַבְרָם אַחֲרֵי הִפָּרֶד־לוֹט
מֵעִמּוֹ שָׂא נָא עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־
אַתָּה שָׁם צָפֹנָה וָנֶגְבָּה וָקֵדְמָה וָיָמָּה׃

3) Genesis Rabbah 41:7

"Lot journeyed from the east [mikedem]" (Genesis 13:11)– he moved himself away from the One who preceded [kadmono] the world. He said: 'I desire neither Abram nor his God.'

בראשית רבה מא:ז

(בראשית יג, יא): וַיִּסַּע לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם, הִסִּיעַ עַצְמוֹ מִקַּדְמוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, אָמַר אִי אֶפְשִׁי לֹא בְּאַבְרָם וְלֹא בֵּאלוֹהוֹ.

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4) Genesis Rabbah 41:8

"God said to Abram…" (Genesis 13:14) –

Rabbi Yuda says: **There was anger** towards our forefather Abraham when he distanced his nephew Lot from him. The Holy Blessed One said: 'He attaches himself to everyone else, but to his own kinsman, Lot, he does not attach himself?'

Rabbi Neḥemya said: The Holy Blessed One was angry while Lot was traveling with Abraham our forefather. The Holy Blessed One said: 'I said to him: *"To your descendants I have given this land"* (Genesis 15:18), and he attaches Lot to him, so that he should inherit [from] him?

If so, let him go and find two foundlings in the street and bequeath to them what is his, as he wishes for his nephew.'

That is what is written: *"Banish the scoffer, and strife will depart" (Proverbs 22:10).* "*Banish the scoffer*" – this refers to Lot; "*and strife will depart*" – "there was a quarrel between the herdsmen of Abram's [livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock]…."

"*And contention and disgrace will cease*" (Proverbs 22:10) – "Please, let there not be a quarrel [between me and you]…."

"One who loves purity of heart, whoever has grace on their lips, the king is their friend" (Proverbs 22:11) – the Holy Blessed One loves whoever is pure of heart. "Whoever has grace on their lips, the king is their friend" – this refers to Abraham, who was faultless and pure of heart and became one who loved the Omnipresent, as it is stated: *"Descendants of Abraham who loved Me"* (Isaiah 41:8).

Because he had "grace on his lips," as it is stated: "*Speaking of his feats, and the grace of his speech"* (Job 41:4), the Holy Blessed One became like a friend to him, saying to him: *"To your descendants I have given this land"* (Genesis 15:18).

בראשית רבה מא:ח

וה' אָמַר אֶל אַבְרָם וגו' (בראשית יג, יד), רַבִּי יוּדָה אוֹמֵר כַּעַס הָיָה לְאָבִינוּ אַבְרָהָם בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁפֵּרַשׁ לוֹט בֶּן אָחִיו מֵעִמּוֹ, אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לַכֹּל הוּא מְדַבֵּק וּלְלוֹט אָחִיו אֵינוֹ מְדַבֵּק.
רַבִּי נְחֶמְיָה אָמַר כַּעַס הָיָה לוֹ לְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהָיָה מְהַלֵּךְ לוֹט עִם אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ, אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ (בראשית טו, יח): לְזַרְעֲךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת, וְהוּא מַדְבִּיק אֶת לוֹט בֶּן אָחִיו כְּדֵי לְיָרְשׁוֹ, אִם כֵּן יֵלֵךְ וְיָבִיא לוֹ שְׁנֵי פַּרְסְתְּקִין מִן הַשּׁוּק וְיוֹרִישֵׁם אֶת שֶׁלּוֹ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא רוֹצֶה בֶּן אָחִיו,
הֲדָא הוּא דִכְתִיב (משלי כב, י): גָּרֵשׁ לֵץ וְיֵצֵא מָדוֹן, גָּרֵשׁ לֵץ, זֶה לוֹט, וְיֵצֵא מָדוֹן, וַיְהִי רִיב בֵּין רֹעֵי אַבְרָם וגו',
(משלי כב, י): וְיִשְׁבֹּת דִּין וְקָלוֹן, וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל לוֹט אַל נָא תְהִי מְרִיבָה וגו',
(משלי כב, יא): אֹהֵב טְהֹר לֵב חֵן שְׂפָתָיו רֵעֵהוּ מֶלֶךְ, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אוֹהֵב כָּל מִי שֶׁהוּא טְהוֹר לֵב, וּמִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ חֵן בִּשְׂפָתָיו מֶלֶךְ הוּא. רֵעֵהוּ, זֶה אַבְרָהָם, שֶׁהָיָה תָּמִים וּטְהוֹר לֵב וְנַעֲשָׂה אוֹהֵבוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ישעיה מא, ח): זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם אֹהֲבִי, וּלְפִי שֶׁהָיָה לוֹ חֵן בִּשְׂפָתָיו, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (איוב מא, ד): וִידַבֵּר גְּבוּרוֹת וְחִין עֶרְכּוֹ, נַעֲשָׂה לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא כְּרֵעַ, שֶׁמִּתּוֹךְ אַהֲבָה שֶׁאֲהֵבוֹ, אָמַר לוֹ (בראשית טו, יח): לְזַרְעֲךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת.

5) Proverbs 22:10 – 11

10) Banish the scoffer and strife will depart, and contention and disgrace will cease.
11) One who loves purity of heart, whoever has grace on their lips, the king is their friend.

משלי כב:י – יא

י) גָּרֵשׁ לֵץ וְיֵצֵא מָדוֹן וְיִשְׁבֹּת דִּין וְקָלוֹן׃
יא) אֹהֵב טְהַר־לֵב חֵן שְׂפָתָיו רֵעֵהוּ מֶלֶךְ׃

6) Isaiah 41:6 – 10

6) Each one helps the other, Saying to his fellow, "Take courage!"
7) The woodworker encourages the smith; He who flattens with the hammer [Encourages] him who pounds the anvil. He says of the riveting, "It is good!" And he fixes it with nails, That it may not topple.
8) But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, Seed of Abraham My beloved,
9) You whom I drew from the ends of the earth And called from its far corners, To whom I said: You are My servant; I chose you, I have not rejected you—
10) Fear not, for I am with you, Be not frightened, for I am your God; I strengthen you and I help you, I uphold you with My victorious right hand.

ישעיהו מא:ו – י

ו) אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יַעְזֹרוּ וּלְאָחִיו יֹאמַר חֲזָק׃
ז) וַיְחַזֵּק חָרָשׁ אֶת־צֹרֵף מַחֲלִיק פַּטִּישׁ אֶת־הוֹלֶם פָּעַם אֹמֵר לַדֶּבֶק טוֹב הוּא וַיְחַזְּקֵהוּ בְּמַסְמְרִים לֹא יִמּוֹט׃
ח) וְאַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתִּיךְ זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם אֹהֲבִי׃
ט) אֲשֶׁר הֶחֱזַקְתִּיךָ מִקְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ וּמֵאֲצִילֶיהָ קְרָאתִיךָ וָאֹמַר לְךָ עַבְדִּי־אַתָּה בְּחַרְתִּיךָ וְלֹא מְאַסְתִּיךָ׃
י) אַל־תִּירָא כִּי עִמְּךָ־אָנִי אַל־תִּשְׁתָּע כִּי־אֲנִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אִמַּצְתִּיךָ אַף־עֲזַרְתִּיךָ אַף־תְּמַכְתִּיךָ בִּימִין צִדְקִי׃

7) Job 41:2 – 6

2) There is no one so fierce as to rouse it; Who then can stand up to Me?

איוב מא:ב – ו

ב) לֹא־אַכְזָר כִּי יְעוֹרֶנּוּ וּמִי הוּא לְפָנַי יִתְיַצָּב׃

3) Whoever confronts Me I will requite, For everything under the heavens is Mine. **4) I will not be silent concerning it, Or the praise of its gracious value.** 5) Who can uncover its outer garment? Who can penetrate the folds of its jowls? 6) Who can pry open the doors of its face? Its bared teeth strike terror.	ג) מִי הִקְדִּימַנִי וַאֲשַׁלֵּם תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם לִי׃ הוּא׃ **ד) לֹא־אַחֲרִישׁ בַּדָּיו וּדְבַר־גְּבוּרוֹת וְחִין עֶרְכּוֹ׃** ה) מִי־גִלָּה פְּנֵי לְבוּשׁוֹ בְּכֶפֶל רִסְנוֹ מִי יָבוֹא׃ ו) דַּלְתֵי פָנָיו מִי פִתֵּחַ סְבִיבוֹת שִׁנָּיו אֵימָה׃

8) Yefeh To'ar on Genesis Rabbah 41:8 *Shmuel Yafeh Ashkenazi - 16th C Constantinople* **"And to Lot his brother he does not cleave."** Even though the land could not bear them dwelling together, nevertheless, had there been peace and love between them, they could have lived together and made do with less space. As we say: "When our love was strong, we could lie together on the width of a sword blade." Nor can one object: "Since Lot was a robber, chose licentiousness, and denied God, how could Avraham draw him close?" For Avraham should not have pushed him away with both hands and distanced him. He should have drawn him close and brought him back in repentance. Without doubt, in Avraham's company Lot would have been healed of his sins.	**יפה תואר על בראשית רבה מא:ח** **וללוט אחיו אינו מדבק.** ואע"ג דלא נשא הארץ אותם לשבת מ"מ אם היה שלום ואהבה ביניהם היו יכלו לשבת יחד ולצמצם את מקומם וכדאמרינן כד רחמתין עזיזא אפותיא דספסירא שכיבין וזה אין קושיא כיון דהוה גזלן ובחר בזנות וכפר בה' איך יקרבהו אברהם כי לא היה לדחותו מפניו בב' ידים ולהרחיקו מאליו אבל היה לו לקרב אליו ולהשיבו בתשובה. ובלי ספק בחברת אברהם נרפא לוט מחטאיו׃