

Kol Simcha: 'Kadima!'

Kadima (Hebrew: קדימה) is a Hebrew word that means literally **forward**. In today's *Torah* Portion (*Lech-Lecha*) our Father Abraham was given the command *Lech-Lecha*, which means "(You) *Get going out*" and he ventured into the unknown future without hesitation. We in *Kol Simcha* are facing a similar situation as the most significant election in our lifetime is at hand. We can learn much from our Father Abraham ("⁷*know then that those who have faith are children of Abraham*" [Gal. 3:7] and "²⁹*And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's seed—heirs according to the promise*" [Gal. 3:29]) but only if we do the deeds of Abraham ("*Yeshua said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham"* John 8:39b). It is not a matter of just **belonging** but we must act according to the promise: "*For not all those who are descended from Israel are Israel, nor are they all children because they are Abraham's seed; rather, "Your seed shall be called through Isaac."*" ⁸*That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God; rather, the children of the promise are counted as seed*" (Ro. 9:6b-8).

As we continue into the 'Book of Beginnings' we encounter many examples of the Law of First mention. We have the first usage of '*Lord My God*' {*Adonai vuvh*} (Gen. 15:2); the phrase "*He trusted Adonai and it was credited to him as righteousness (tzedakah)*" (Gen. 15:6); another name for God: '*El Ro'i*' (Gen. 16:13) meaning God of Vision: "*The Well of the Living One: Be-er LaChai Ro'i*"; the name '*El Shadai*,' meaning the *All-Sufficient One* (lit. the '*breasted One*') (Gen. 17:1); the sign of the Covenant of Circumcision (*LeOt Berit*) – literally a sign, a mark, a ring (Gen. 17:11); and that Abraham laughed – *VaYitzchak* (Gen. 17:17).

According to the great Jewish commentator *Maimonides (Rambam)* there is a principle in understanding the *Torah's* narrative concerning the Patriarchs: *LeAvot Siman LaBanim Kol Ma She-ira* – '*Whatever happened to the Patriarchs is a portent for their children.*' The *Torah* relates at length such incidents (their journeys, digging wells, etc.), because they serve as lessons for the future. Such is Abraham's first stopover in *Shechem*. It turns out later that *Shechem* will be the first place conquered by our Jewish people (see Gen. 34:25) hundreds of years before Israel gains full possession of the land. Abraham prayed there: "*I will give this land to your seed.*" *So there he built an altar to Adonai, who had appeared to him*" (Gen. 12:7). These prayers are now in place for Jacob's children (*The Children of Israel*) who will fight against *Shechem*. The next place mentioned is *Ai*, the first place conquered by Joshua. He intercedes there praying at the very site his descendants will be faced with a potential catastrophe because of the sin of *Achan* (Jos. 7).

Abraham goes down to Egypt because of a famine (foreshadowing Jacob's descent to Egypt with his entire family due to a famine.) The incident of *lying* about Sarah is repeated by Isaac and Rebekah and also foretells of Laban's lies about Rachel and Leah. Can you see how consequences mount up and come to visit later – even in the life of our children! His terrible and deceptive plan comes back to haunt him, his children and his grandchildren, to the third and fourth generation!

We have the same identical call – we must get going (*kadima*). We have to be righteous before the Lord and we must trust Him and move forward. What made Abraham a righteous before the Lord? Scripture answers this question for us both in the *TNK* and in the *B'rit Chadasha*: "³*For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness..."* ⁶*Then he believed in Adonai and He reckoned it to him as righteousness* (Ro. 4:3, Gen 15:6). We must also believe (trust) in *Adonai*.

As I prepared for today's message, I became persuaded that we have a nearly identical decision to make in our day. I am convicted that the Lord is requiring from you and I an answer to the same question posed to our Father Abraham – *Lech Lecha Mearetzcha* – literally, "*Get going out from your familiar.*" We must do the same thing today – obey and get out of our comfort zone, get out of that which is familiar, get out of the traditions of our forefathers, even out of the vestiges our *mother country*.

In reviewing Genesis 12:1-3 the order of disengaging is significant (the order of the words in Scripture is divinely inspired also). First, he wants us out of our connection to our *homeland* (*mearetzcha*). America is at a crossroad and we see rebellion, complacency and resistance to return to the Almighty. Things in this world have

changed and life demands change. We cannot continue in the same mindset we were last year: *“We had it good, we want it good, and we will have it good, period”*. He wants us to go to the place where He will *show us*.

The next level is that of our *kindred (mimoladtecha)*, our homeland, country of birth, or motherland. The Lord is not interested in our kindred. He is giving us a new lineage as His Children. Lastly, out of our *earthly father’s house (mebayit Abicha)*, or our immediate family circle. This means that we are to forsake the familiar traditions of our upbringing, and the fond and persistent memories of yesterday in our homes. Where are we going? *“To a land that I will show you...”* which could be interpreted as the *future that I will show you*.

But there will be issues within the family. As Abraham increased, so did his household, including his nephew Lot. There are new pressures and a price associated with success in any family. The strife is not between Abraham and Lot, but between their servants. Once a family has gone through tough times together, they bond together with cords that cannot be broken. Nevertheless the time for Lot’s departure arrives and he is given the choice of the land. Notice Abraham’s unselfishness. Also notice how *Adonai* quickly reappears on the scene to reassure Abraham that everything belongs to him anyway (See *Gen. 13:14-18*).

Lot became part of the *prosperity* of the world around him. But be warned that if you join the world, the world by its very nature, will bring upon you trouble. *“¹Now it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim,” Gen. 14:1*. The Jewish sages identify *Amraphel* as *Nimrod* and *Chedorlaomer* as *Elam*, son of *Shem* son of *Noah*. Do you see the connection with worldliness and spiritual wickedness? Do you see the principle that evil does not stand still and that evil invokes more evil so that evil itself increases? The Torah states: *“¹²They also took Lot, Abram’s nephew, and his possessions, and they left (as he was living in Sodom)” (Gen. 14:12)*. Lot’s selfishness had ultimately gotten him and his family in BIG trouble. Lot deserved his fate for he was residing in *Sodom*. Duh! He had made his free will choice to leave his godly family and associate with wicked people – the *Sodomites*!

Abraham armed his *yelidei beito* literally the *youths of his home* (his children) and pursued and routed the enemy. The *Artscroll Chumash* refers to this group as *his disciples*, i.e., his *talmidim*. No wonder Scripture refers to our children as gifts and arrows for waging war: *“³Behold, children are a heritage of Adonai – the fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of one’s youth. ⁵Happy is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the gate” (Ps 127:4-5)*.

Abraham succeeded in defeating the enemy and was met by both the king of Sodom (the rewards of this world) and the king of Salem (the *cohen* of El Elyon), *Malki-Tzedek*, and was given the opportunity to have great reward for his effort: either an earthly reward or a heavenly reward. What will Abraham choose: to invest (pay tithes) or to receive the spoils of possessions? What are the eternal implications of such a choice? The *Artscroll Chumash* states: *“By giving tithes to Malchizedek, Abraham symbolized that his descendants would give maseh [tithes] to the Levites [ministry]” (page 65 commentary on verse 20)*. This is why Scripture tells us how *Rabbi Paul* and *Yeshua* felt about this issue: *“...remembering the words of the Lord Yeshua himself, ‘There is more happiness (it is more blessed to give than to receive) in giving than in receiving’” (Acts 20:35)*. We also notice that this happened only *after* Abraham had fought to preserve his family (See *Gen 14:16-23*).

In KS, we facing the same pressures but we also have great opportunities. We can choose the Almighty’s ways or we can choose our way. We are confronted with strife among our own family, perhaps not with our *immediate* family, but with those from our *other* family. Will strife succeed in driving us apart? Is it His will that we each go our own way? Has He promised us the land, the entire city/county, so to speak? Will we go after the enemy in order to recover our *nephews and nieces*? Then we will experience a visit from the *Malki-Tzedek*, My Righteous King (King *Yeshua*). *Shabbat Shalom!*