

"THE EPISTLE OF JAMES"
"Talk the Talk but Walk the Walk"
A Servant Of God And The Lord Jesus Christ (1:1)
Pasha – Lekh Lekha- Go forth Yourself

Genesis 12:1-9

The Call of Abram

1(A) the LORD said[a] to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2(B) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3(C) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and(D) in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." [b] 4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from [E] Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram [F] passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to [G] the oak [c] of [H] Moreh. At that time [I] the Canaanites were in the land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, [J] "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved to the hill country on the east of [K] Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. 9 And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb

Isaiah 41:1-10

1 [G] Listen to me in silence, [H] O coastlands; [I] let the peoples renew their strength; [J] let them approach, then let them speak; [K] let us together draw near for judgment. 2 [L] Who stirred up one from the east [M] whom victory meets at every [N] step? [O] [K] He gives up nations before him, [P] so that he tramples kings underfoot; [Q] he makes them like dust with his sword, [R] [L] like driven stubble with his bow. 3 He pursues them and passes on safely, [S] by paths his feet have not trod. 4 [M] Who has performed and done this, [N] calling the generations from the beginning? [O] [N] I, the LORD, the first, [P] and with the last; I am he. 5 [Q] The coastlands have seen and are afraid; [R] the ends of the earth tremble; [S] they have drawn near and come. 6 Everyone helps his neighbor [T] and says to his brother, "Be strong!" 7 [P] The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith, [Q] and he who smooths with the hammer him who strikes the anvil, [R] saying of the soldering, "It is good"; [S] and they strengthen it with nails [Q] so that it cannot be moved. 8 But you, Israel, (R) my servant, [S] Jacob, (S) whom I have chosen, [T] the offspring of Abraham, (T) my friend; [U] you whom I took from the ends of the earth, [V] and called [U] from its farthest corners, [W] saying to you, "You are [V] my servant, [W] I have chosen you and not cast you off"; 10 fear not, for I am with you; [X] be not dismayed, for I am your God; [Y] I will strengthen you, I will help you, [Z] I will uphold you with [X] my righteous right hand.

James 1:1

1(A) James, a servant [a] of God and (B) of the Lord Jesus Christ, To (C) the twelve tribes in (D) the Dispersion: Greetings.

Pasha: Insight

G-d said to Avram, "Leave your land, and the place of your birth, and the house of your father, for the land which I will show you." (Bereishis 12:1)

The power of "Lech-Lecha" is not just that it once started something small that led to something very big-it is that it continues to start "small things" and empower them with the potential to become big-VERY big. For, these opening words of this week's parshah apply to every Jew, have always and will always until Moshiach comes and makes them superfluous.

They can be re-phrased: G-d asked Avram, "Are you ready for a relationship with Me on MY terms?"

This is because the struggle of Mankind has never really been whether or not he should relate to G-d; the overwhelming passion for idol-worship of all forms reveals Man's need to relate to spiritual forces. Even today, in our so-called "modern society," emptiness is the result of a totally hedonistic lifestyle, and all the money and toys in the world cannot seem to fill that void.

No, the struggle for Mankind has been to relate to G-d on HIS terms, and not on OUR terms. Even in Eretz Yisroel, where, very ironically, anti-G-d attitudes seem to be so strong, a recent poll by an a left-wing newspaper revealed a very high percentage of Israeli belief in G-d. However, everything began to get complicated and convoluted when people were asked, "And what kind of G-d do you believe in?"

"Lech-Lecha" represents the directive to take the plunge and leave that mentality behind, at least when it comes to a relationship with G-d. It is the challenge to stop pursuing G-d and spirituality on our own terms, in order to learn to reach out for G-d on His terms. This is what separated Avram from the world around him then, and, it is what has separated the Jew from the society around him all throughout the generations until this very day, until Moshiach will come.

land. For the most part, he had troubles - also forms of exile - the rest of his life which never really allowed him to fully experience personal redemption. It has been no different for his billions of descendants over thousands of years.

Haf-Torah Insight

8But you, Israel, ^(R) my servant, □ Jacob, ^(S) whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, ^(T) my friend; □ 9you whom I took from the ends of the earth, □ and called ^(U) from its farthest corners, □ saying to you, "You are ^(V) my servant, □ ^(W) I have chosen you and not cast you off"; □ 10fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; □ I will strengthen you, I will help you, □ I will uphold you with ^(X) my righteous right hand.

NT Insight:

James identifies himself as a servant, not Yeshua's brother, not a leader but a servant

I Mindset of a Disciple: To be a Servant

A. James a **Servant** of our God and Lord Yeshua Messiah!

1. The Hebrew word for servant is “eved” which means

Possibly, the greatest picture of the word(*avad*=**To Serve**) is found in a noun that comes from this verb. It is the word (*eved*.= **“servant.”**) Beloved, *eved* [servant] describes a person who *avad*-s [serves] God, not the other way around. To be known as a “servant [*eved*] of the Living God,” comes from the fact that one actually serves [*avad*] God. Let’s look at some people to whom God gives the name, “My servant” [*eved*]. In the chart that follows, note what these people did (or will do) in relationship to Him calling them His servant.

Abraham / Genesis 26:24

Moses / Numbers 12:7

Caleb / Numbers 14:24

David / 1 Kings 14:8

Job / Job 1:8

Messiah – Yeshua / Isaiah 42:1-4 (cross-reference Matthew 12:18-21)

Messiah – Yeshua / Isaiah 52:13-15

Yeshua is the perfect example of the servant. That is to say that His actions and ministry describe for us what *avad* [serve] means. Read Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:12 and make note of what the Perfect Servant has done and ask yourself it indeed He has called you to follow in His footsteps...

2. The Greek word used in place of the Hebrew word *avad*, is *latreuo* (Pronounced: lat- ryoo-o). It means a “hired menial.”

Servant:

sur²-vant (’ebhedh; doulos): A very common word with a variety of meanings, all implying a greater or less degree of inferiority and want of freedom:

(1) The most frequent usage is as the equivalent of "slave" (which see), with its various shades in position (Ge 9:25; 24:9; Ex 21:5; Mt 10:24; Lu 17:7, and often); but also a hired workman where "hired servant" translates Hebrew and Greek expressions which differ from the above.

(2) An attendant in the service of someone, as Joshua was the "servant" the Revised Version (British and American) "minister" of Moses (Nu 11:28).

(3) As a ‘term of respectful self-depreciation referring to one’s self, "thy servant." or "your servant" is used in place of the personal pronoun of the first person:

(a) in the presence of superiors (Ge 19:2; 32:18, and often);

(b) in addressing the Supreme Being (1Sa 3:9; Ps 19:11; 27:9; Lu 2:29, and often).

(4) Officials of every grade are called the "servants" of kings, princes, etc. (1Sa 29:3; 2Sa 16:1; 1Ki 11:26; Pr 14:35, and often).

(5) The position of a king in relation to his people (1Ki 12:7).

(6) One who is distinguished as obedient and faithful to God or Christ (Jos 1:2; 2Ki 8:19; Da 6:20; Col 4:12; 2Ti 2:24). (7) One who is enslaved by sin (Joh 8:34).

Beloved, serving God is one purpose for which His has made us. We serve Him in a variety of ways, but not the least of which is obeying His commands to us. To serve God is an act of worship. It is our

responsibility to serve God, but beloved it is our great honor as well. One day, those who love God will serve Him forever. Until that day, what will you **do**, to serve God?

*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and **His servants shall serve Him**. Revelation 22:1-4*

3. The idea of Servant or Disciple found in Pertkei Avot

Mishnah 3

אנטיגנוס איש סוכו קיבל משמעון הצדיק הוא היה אומר אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס אלא הווי כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת שלא לקבל פרס ויהא מורא שמים עליכם

Antigonus of Socho received the Torah from Shimon the Righteous. He used to say: Be not like servants who minister unto their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve their master not upon the condition of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.

Rather Be Like Servants Who Serve Their Master Without The Intent Of Receiving A Reward

There are other versions of this *mishnah*[17] which read "be like servants who serve their master without receiving a reward."

What is the difference between these two versions? The version included by the Alter Rebbe in his *siddur* emphasizes that people will receive rewards for divine service, but that the reward should not be the focus of one's attention. The other version, by contrast, negates the very concept of reward. As the Alter Rebbe would say:[18] "I do not want Your *Gan Eden*, nor do I want Your World to Come. I want only You."

Although the Alter Rebbe himself was able to reach this rung, he realized that it was beyond the reach of most people. Therefore, when choosing the text of *Pirkei Avos* to be included in the *siddur* - a text to be used by all people - he chose the former version.

(Sichos Shabbos Parshas Pinchas, 5737)

Avot 1:3

Let The Fear Of Heaven Be Upon You

Our Sages relate[19] that Antigonus of Socho had two talented students, Tzadok and Beitus. When Antigonus taught: "Do not be like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward," they turned away in disgust, commenting: "Is it proper for a worker to toil the entire day without receiving any recompense?"

They began splinter groups which coveted material wealth and rejected the core of Jewish practice.

On finding that they could not convince the majority of the people to reject the Torah, they claimed they were true to Torah, but that the only Torah that was G-dly in origin was the Written Law. The Oral Law, they maintained, was merely a human invention.[20]

Antigonus appreciated that his students' error stemmed from a dearth of *yiras shomayim*, fear of heaven. Therefore he felt it necessary to emphasize the importance of this quality.

Read Commentary-Chapter 1, Mishnah 3

Antigonus of Socho received the tradition from Shimon the Righteous. He would say: Do not be as slaves, who serve their master for the sake of reward. Rather, be as slaves who serve their master not for the sake of reward. And the fear of Heaven should be upon you.

Although we know that everything we do for Hashem should be not for the sake of reward (i.e. "heaven", unlike popular theology teaches us), but for the sake of our love for Hashem alone—many doctrines are formed around the antithesis of this statement. Preachers are peddling either "tickets to eternity" or "fire insurance". They leave out the part about a covenantal relationship with the Creator & King of the Universe. Their doctrine only is concerned about one thing: where a person will spend eternity—in the blissful euphoria of a heavenly realm, or the burning pits of hell. I'm afraid neither of these is what salvation is all about. Salvation, in its purist sense, is about having Hashem as your ally in the battles of life, your friend in times of trouble. It's about not having Him as your enemy, because there is no defense against His wrath. It's about living in covenantal relationship with the Almighty, and having no regrets when He says "Well done, my good and faithful servant." Salvation is now. Salvation is a process (of self-transformation). Salvation is not necessarily a destination.

I don't have time to elaborate on this much, but this is also a classic example of how something can be said, misunderstood, and entirely new doctrines formed around the misunderstanding. It is taught that after Antigonus made this statement, his disciples after him began to teach that since we do not serve Hashem for reward, there must not be a reward, and thus began to teach that there was no resurrection. This is traditionally how the heretical sects of the Sadducees and Beothusians got started. This is why it is so important that those of us who are teachers are teaching as much truth as possible, and making sure we are understood properly. We will touch on this more in Mishnah 11

II The Realities of a Life of a Disciple

I. Who are we? People who Serve

I. BEING A SERVANT IS "WHAT A DISCIPLE OF JESUS IS CALLED TO BE"

A. Who are we? Servants of the Lord

1. While pointing out the faults of the scribes and Pharisee [Mt 23:8-12](#)
2. During the Last Supper, with a vivid demonstration of servitude [Jn 13:12-17](#)
3. Even by His own example, as He came to serve - [Mt 20:25-28](#); [Php 2:5-8](#)

B. SPECIFICALLY, WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE...

1. God - [Jm 1:1](#); [He 9:14](#)
2. Jesus Christ - [Jm 1:1](#); [1Co 4:1](#)
3. Righteousness - [Ro 6:17-18](#)
4. Each other - [Ga 5:13](#); [1Co 9:19-23](#)

[The early Christians called themselves "servants", because that is what they were! But what is so good about being a "servant"? For one thing...]

II. BEING A SERVANT IS "A MARK OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY"

Process

A. AN IMMATURE PERSON IS USUALLY VERY SELFISH...

1. For example, newborn babies are very ego-centric
2. Normally, as people grow older, they begin to concern themselves with the needs of others
 - a. If they do, they are becoming mature
 - b. If they remain selfish, it is an indication of immaturity

B. A PERSON WHO SERVES OTHERS...

1. Is certainly not selfish, but concerned with the needs of others
2. And thereby demonstrates mature behavior

C. JAMES' DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF FITS IN VERY WELL WITH THE "THEME" OF HIS EPISTLE...

1. Remember, the theme is: **MARKS OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY**
2. By being a servant, James is demonstrating his own spiritual maturity
3. And we can make the point that one of the marks of spiritual maturity is truly being

III. BEING A SERVANT HAS SEVERAL "IMPLICATIONS"

Price

A. IT IMPLIES "ABSOLUTE HARDSHIP"...

Jam 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises

2Ti 2:3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2Ti 4:5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry

1. It is a slave-master relationship...
 - a. The slave knows no law but his master's word
 - b. He has no rights of his own
 - c. He is the absolute possession of his master
 - d. He is bound to give his master unquestioning obedience
2. Does this describe our relationship to Christ?
 - a. It should, especially in light of **1Co 6:19-20**
 - b. We have to come to Jesus on HIS terms, not our own – **Lk 6:46; Mt 7:21**

B. IT IMPLIES "ABSOLUTE HUMILITY"...

Jam 4:10 **Humble** yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up

Act 20:19 Serving the Lord with all **humility** of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

Mat 23:11 "But the greatest among you shall be your servant

Mat 23:12 "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted

But ^hhe who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ^{12 i} And whoever exalts himself will be ⁵humbled, and he who humbles himself will be ⁶exalted.

1. Otherwise, absolute obedience is not possible
 - a. When we have a humble opinion of ourselves, we are receptive to the idea of complete obedience
 - b. For example, consider Paul's self-estimation - [1Co 15:9-10](#);
[Ep 3:8](#); [1Ti 1:15](#)
2. Does this describe our relationship to Christ and His Will?
 - a. Jesus said it should! - [Lk 17:10](#)
 - b. But if we murmur or complain about what Jesus tells us to do, can we really be considered

"servants"?

IV. ABSOLUTY "HONORABLE"

Phl 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things

A. FAR FROM BEING A TITLE OF DISHONOR, IT WAS THE TITLE BY WHICH THE GREATEST MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE KNOWN...

1. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - [Deut 9:27](#) ("Thy servants")
2. Moses - [1Ki 8:53](#) ("Thy servant")
3. Joshua - [Josh 24:29](#) ("Servant of the Lord")
4. Caleb - [Num 14:24](#) ("My servant")
5. Job - [Job 1:8](#) ("My servant")
6. Isaiah - [Isa 20:3](#) ("My servant")
7. The prophets - [Jer 7:25](#) ("My servants")

CONCLUSION

1. He will, IF we are willing to accept the call to serve Him and His

Son Jesus Christ with...

- a. Absolute Hard
- b. Absolute Humility
- c. Absolute Honorable

2. And when we are serving God, His Son Jesus Christ, and even each other in this manner, we are making great strides towards SPIRITUAL MATURITY!

1. Study Questions

Read Luke 2:36-37. The word *latreuo* [serve] is used to describe what Anna did – can you list what she did that is regarded as *latreuo* [serving]?

Read Hebrews 12:28-29 talks of *latreuo* [serve] – how is it described?

Another word used is *daikoneo* (Pronounced: *dee-ak-on-eh-o*) – from where we get the word “deacon.”

Read Luke 17:7-10 and list what Yeshua’s servants should **do**: