



Exodus 12: Passover in Egypt

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you. ³Speak to the whole community of Israel and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household... ⁶You shall keep watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month; and all the assembled congregation of the Israelites shall slaughter it at twilight... ⁸They shall eat the flesh that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs... **"This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a passover offering to the Lord..."**

²¹Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. ²²**Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.** ²³For when the Lord goes through to smite the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the lintel and the

two doorposts, **and the Lord will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home...**

Talmud Bavli Bava Kama 60a

Rav Yosef taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And none of you shall go out of the opening of his house until the morning" [Ex. 12:22]? **Once permission is granted to the Destroyer to kill, it does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked.**

³⁹And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, **since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay**; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

Genesis 18-19: The Foretelling of Isaac's Birth & the Destruction of Sodom

Scene 1: Sarah's motherhood foretold (18:1-15)

The Lord appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting **at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot.** ²Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran **from the entrance of the tent** to greet them and, bowing to the ground, ³he said, "My lords, if it please you, do not go on past your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline **under the tree.** ⁵And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves; then go on—seeing that you have come your servant's way." They replied, "Do as you have said."

⁶Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quick, **three seahs of choice flour!** Knead and make cakes!" ⁷Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸He took **curds and milk and the calf** that had been prepared and set these before them; and he waited on them **under the tree** as they ate.



⁹They said to him, **“Where is your wife Sarah?” And he replied, “There, in the tent.”** ¹⁰Then one said, “I will return to you next year, and your wife Sarah shall have a son!” **Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent**, which was behind him. “Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; Sarah had stopped having the periods of women. ¹²**And Sarah laughed** to herself, saying, “Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment—with my husband so old?” ¹³Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?’” ¹⁴**Is anything too wondrous for the Lord?** I will return to you at the time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵Sarah lied, saying, “I did not laugh,” for she was frightened. But He replied, “You did laugh.”

Genesis 15: 1-15: Abraham’s descendants foretold

Sometime later, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. He said, “Fear not, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”... ³Abram said further, “Since You have granted me no offspring, my steward will be my heir.” ⁴The word of the Lord came to him in reply, “That one shall not be your heir; none but your very own issue shall be your heir.” ⁵**He took him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He added, “So shall your offspring be.”**

Rashi (v. 5)

“He took him outside”: Its simple meaning is: He brought him outside his tent so that he could look at the stars. Its midrashic explanation is: **Step outside your astrological projections**, for you have seen in the constellations that you will not father a son. Abram may have no son, but *Abraham* will have a son; Sarai may not bear a child but *Sarah* will bear: I will call you by another name, and your fate will be changed...

Scene 2: Abraham bargains with God (18:16-33)

¹⁶The men set out from there and looked down toward Sodom, Abraham walking with them to see them off. ¹⁷Now the Lord had said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸since Abraham is to become a great and populous nation and all the nations of the earth are to bless themselves by him? ¹⁹For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right, in order that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.” ²⁰Then the Lord said, “The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! ²¹I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note.”

²²The men went on from there to Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. ²³Abraham came forward and said, **“Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?”** ²⁴What if there should be fifty innocent within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

Malbim (v. 18)

A question regarding Abraham’s demand that God not sweep away the righteous with the wicked: Why did he ask that all the people of the city be spared on account [of the righteous]? Wouldn’t it be enough for only the righteous to be spared? **For anywhere permission is given to the Destroyer to kill, it does not distinguish between the good and the evil...**



²⁶And the Lord answered, “If I find within the city of Sodom fifty innocent ones, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷Abraham spoke up, saying, “Here I venture to speak to my Lord, I who am but dust and ashes: ²⁸What if the fifty innocent should lack five? Will You destroy the whole city for want of the five?” And He answered, “I will not destroy if I find forty-five there.” ²⁹But he spoke to Him again, and said, “What if forty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it, for the sake of the forty.” ³⁰And he said, “Let not my Lord be angry if I go on: What if thirty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” ³¹And he said, “I venture again to speak to my Lord: What if twenty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not destroy, for the sake of the twenty.” ³²And he said, “Let not my Lord be angry if I speak but this last time: What if ten should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not destroy, for the sake of the ten.”

³³When the Lord had finished speaking to Abraham, He departed; and Abraham returned to his place.

Scene 3: The destruction of Sodom (19:1-29)

The two angels arrived in Sodom in the evening, as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to greet them and, bowing low with his face to the ground, ²he said, “Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant’s house to spend the night, and bathe your feet; then you may be on your way early.” But they said, “No, we will spend the night in

Rashi (v. 3)

“...And baked unleavened bread”: **It was Passover.**

the square.” ³But he urged them strongly, so they turned his way and entered his house. He prepared a feast for them and baked **unleavened bread**, and they ate.

⁴They had not yet lain down, when the townspeople, the men of Sodom, young and old—all the people to the last man—gathered **about the house**. ⁵And they shouted to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may be intimate with them.” ⁶So Lot went out to them **to the entrance, shut the door** behind him, ⁷and said, “I beg you, my friends, do not commit such a wrong. ⁸Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you please; but do not do anything to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹But they said, “Stand back! The fellow,” they said, “came here as an alien, and already he acts the ruler! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” **And they pressed hard against the person of Lot**, and moved forward **to break the door**. ¹⁰But the men stretched out their hands and pulled Lot **into the house** with them, and shut the door. ¹¹And the people who were **at the entrance of the house**, young and old, they struck with blinding light, so that **they were helpless to find the entrance**.

¹²Then the men said to Lot, “Whom else have you here? Sons-in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else that you have in the city—bring them out of the place. ¹³For we are about to destroy this place; because the outcry against them before the Lord has become so great that the Lord has sent us to destroy it.” ¹⁴So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Up, get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city.” **But he seemed to his sons-in-law as one who jests.**

¹⁵As dawn broke, the angels urged Lot on, saying, “Up, take your wife and your two remaining daughters, lest you be swept away because of the iniquity of the city.” ¹⁶**Still he delayed.** So the men seized his hand, and the hands of his wife and his two daughters—in the Lord’s mercy on him—and brought him out and left him outside the city. ¹⁷When they had brought them outside, one said, “Flee for your life! Do not look behind you, nor stop anywhere in the Plain; flee to the hills, **lest you be swept away.**” ¹⁸But Lot said to them, “Oh



no, my lord! ¹⁹You have been so gracious to your servant, and have already shown me so much kindness in order to save my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. ²⁰Look, that town there is near enough to flee to; it is such a little place! Let me flee there—it is such a little place—and let my life be saved.” ²¹He replied, “Very well, I will grant you this favor too, and I will not annihilate the town of which you have spoken. ²²Hurry, flee there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Hence the town came to be called Zoar.

²³As the sun rose upon the earth and Lot entered Zoar, ²⁴the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfurous fire from the Lord out of heaven. ²⁵He annihilated those cities and the entire Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities and the vegetation of the ground. ²⁶Lot’s wife looked back, and she thereupon turned into a pillar of salt.

²⁷Next morning, Abraham hurried to the place where he had stood before the Lord, ²⁸and, looking down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the Plain, he saw the smoke of the land rising like the smoke of a kiln.

²⁹Thus it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain and annihilated the cities where Lot dwelt, **God was mindful of Abraham and removed Lot from the midst of the upheaval.**

Scene 4: Lot and his daughters in the cave

³⁰Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the hill country with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he and his two daughters lived **in a cave**. ³¹And the older one said to the younger, “Our father is old, and **there is not a man on earth to consort with us** in the way of all the world. ³²Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father.” ³³That night they made their father drink wine, and the older one went in and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. ³⁴The next day the older one said to the younger, “See, I lay with Father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go and lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father.” ³⁵That night also they made their father drink wine, and the younger one went and lay with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.

³⁶Thus the two daughters of Lot came to be with child by their father. ³⁷The older one bore a son and named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. ³⁸And the younger also bore a son, and she called him Ben-ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.