

Genesis 15:1-21

Verse 15:1

אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם בַּמַּחֲזֵה לְאמֹר
אֶל־תִּירָא אַבְרָם אֲנֹכִי מִגֵּן לְךָ שְׂכָרְךָ הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד

While I recognized and understood all but one of the following words, I felt a need to confirm my understanding. So I looked them up in my lexicon to be sure.

בַּמַּחֲזֵה (*bammachazei*) – in-the-vision. Note that this is the only occurrence in the Hebrew Bible of the word for vision occurring with the definite article (as indicated by the dagesh in the mem).

תִּירָא (*tira*) – fear-will-you

מִגֵּן (*magen*) – a shield

שְׂכָרְךָ (*səkharkha*) – your-wages, your-hire: The basic idea of the word is remuneration as in, for example, wages paid for work done. The various contexts in which this verb appears adds the color to the meaning.

הַרְבֵּה (*harbeyh*) – much, very

מְאֹד (*məod*) – muchness, force

Note: *harbeyh məod* -> very much

Context:

This verse follows the successful rescue of Lot and a discussion between Melchizedek and Abram in chapter 13 about how the spoils of the battle are to be divided. Rashi's interpretation of this verse refers back to the battles that occurred as described in chapter 14. Here is a quote from Rashi's commentary on this verse:

After these incidents: Whenever the term אַחַר is used, it signifies immediately afterwards; אַחֲרָי signifies a long time afterwards (Gen. Rabbah 44:5). After this miracle had been wrought for him, that he slew the kings, he was worried and said, "Perhaps I have received reward for all my righteous deeds." Therefore, the Omnipresent said to him, "Fear not Abram, I am your Shield" from

punishment, that you will not be punished for all those souls that you have slain, and as far as your being worried about receiving reward, your reward is exceedingly great.¹

Rashi's commentary seems to be suggesting that God is assuaging Abram on two fronts: first, he will not be punished for the killing that occurred previously. And second, he will be rewarded.

Translations

Mechanical:

Following the-things these the-word-of the-LORD to-Avram, in-the-vision to-say "not-fear-will-you, Avram, I a-shield for-you your-wages very muchness

Literal:

Following these things [were, came] the word of the LORD to Avram in the vision saying, "Not-will-you-fear, Avram, I am a shield for you; your wages [will be] very great.

Mine:

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in the vision saying, "Fear not, Avram. I am a shield for you. Your wages shall be very great.

NIV

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

NET

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram! I am your shield and the one who will reward you in great abundance."

¹ from Aggadath Bereishith 16:2; Tan. Buber, Lech Lecha 15; Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer ch. 27