**MIDRASH III: Abram and the Idols**

One morning, Abram’s father, Terach, said to him, “Son, I feel very tired today. Will you work in the idol shop in my place?” Abram told his father that he would be glad to help him.

Soon a man came to buy an idol to protect his home. Abram showed him a fierce-looking idol. The man liked it and paid him for it.

Then Abram asked the man, “How old are you?”

 “I am fifty years old and have been a soldier for more than thirty years,” was the answer.

Abram laughed, “You are fifty years old. You have much experience as a soldier. This idol was carved by my father only last week. Still you seek protection from it.”

The man threw the image away and said, “This is the last god of wood or stone I’m going to worship!”

An old woman entered the store next. “My house has been robbed, and my god was stolen from me. Sell me another one,” she said.

Abram smiled. “Your idol couldn’t even protect himself. How do you expect him to protect you?” The woman ran angrily out of the store.

A few days later, Terach had to go traveling and asked Abram to serve the gods and act as their priest while he was gone.

“What does the priest have to do?” Abram asked his father.

“He stands and offers sacrifices to them. He gives them food and drink.”

The next morning Abram went to his mother, Amatla, and asked her to prepare some delicious food for the gods to eat so he could feed them. He took the good food that she prepared and brought it into the little temple in the courtyard of his house. He gave each idol a portion of food.

He waited awhile and then called the workmen to the courtyard. He said, “I don’t know what’s the matter with these idols. I’ve given them this good food. Look, they won’t move an inch to take it. Maybe the food isn’t good enough for them. Tomorrow I’m going to bring them much better things to eat. I want you all to come and see how pleased the gods will be.”

The next day Abram’s mother took three young goats. She made a tasty stew out of them. While the workmen watched, Abram carefully set a delicious bowl of stew in front of each idol. Then he said, “”I’ve given the gods much tastier food than they have ever eaten. Maybe they are ashamed to eat in front of us. Let’s come back tomorrow morning. I’m sure they will have finished everything.” So, the workmen left.

As soon as the workers were gone, Abram took a big hammer, went back to his father’s idol shop, and began smashing all the idols. He smashed everyone except the largest idol. He carefully put the hammer in its hand. The next morning when his father came home, he went into the idol shop with his workmen. When he saw how the idols had been smashed, he almost fainted. He called Abram at once and asked him, “What in the world happened?”

“Your workmen are witnesses,” said Abram calmly. “They saw how good I was to these gods of yours. Mother prepared the most delicious food for them with her own hands. I brought it to them yesterday, and the day before, and I gave each idol its proper portion.”

“That’s perfectly true!” exclaimed the workmen together.

“Then whatever happened afterward?” thundered Terach.

“I suppose,” said Abram very quietly, “that the food was so delicious that each one wanted the portions of the others. They started to fight. Finally the biggest god of all must have become angry and taken the hammer and smashed the rest of the gods to pieces. Look, the hammer is still in his hand.”

Terach saw that Abram was teasing him, and he shouted, “Why do you tell me such a story? Do you think your father is a fool? I know that idols cannot move! I know they cannot see, hear, or speak! Why did you tell me such lies?”

Again, Abram spoke quietly. “Father,” he said, “if the idols cannot see, or hear, or speak Ñ if they do not really know what is happening Ñ how can you ask people to buy them and pray to them as if they were gods?”

Terach had no answer.