

Lech Lecha: Fighting Theories of The Master Race

- Nisson Shulman.

This is another version of the sermon SERVING HUMANITY OR RULING HUMANITY, using different illustrations, especially the episode of how Arab soldiers refused Jewish blood for transfusion, and the extent of Israel's efforts to treat Arab soldiers with Arab blood.

(This sermon is another approach to the sermon on Racism. It repeats the main theme, but is submitted because of telling examples used to illustrate.)

LECH LECHA: FIGHTING THEORIES OF RACIAL SUPERIORITY

I have several questions.

First: In Pirke Avot, traits of character are described. The open-handed tzadik who gives and brings others to give, the rasha who wants what others have. In the middle, between these extremes, there is midat sedom, sheli sheli shelcha shelcha.

But why? Why, on the basis of this quality, were the people of Sodom considered so wicked? After all, this is the principle of private property! What's so bad about it?

Second: The Torah declares that Anshe sedom raim vehataim laHashem meod. But according to the Midrash, all their sins were against people! Why Does the Torah stress that they sinned laHashem?

Third: When Avraham was given the mitzvah of milah the Torah tells us he fell on his face. Simple peshat would indicate that he fell on his face in amazement or in thanksgiving. Yet the Midrash indicates that he fell on his face in protest. Why did Abraham protest? Furthermore, the Midrash indicates that his protest was about hospitality: Amar Avraham; ad achshav hayu ovriv veshavim baim etzli. Tomar achshav mishemalti ein ovriv veshavim baim etzli? Why emphasize hospitality?

God's answer what to change Avraham's name. He is promised to be an av hamon goyim! What does this answer mean? How did it reassure Abraham? Why is calling him by the name of Avram a violation of Torah?

All the above are linked. The answer tells us a great deal about Judaism and our relation to the society in which we live.

Sdom's sin is against Hashem because it was against fellow human beings. God punishes nations for sins against fellow humans. Consider the generation of the flood where the people were wiped out, and compare it to the generation of the Tower of Babel, where they were merely dispersed. The final decree, the gezar din of the flood was because vatimale haaretz hamas mipneyhem. Sedom was considere raim vahataim laHashem meod precisely because their sins

were against fellow human beings. Said Rab Yohanan: Come and see how great is the sin of violence. For the generation of the flood violated everything, but their doom was finally sealed only because of theft and violence.

Furthermore, against whom did they practice their wickedness? Not against all fellow human beings. Citizens of Sdom were apparently treated justly. That is why Lot could live amongst them. All the stories and midrashim of their wickedness have one common denominator. They were all against strangers. The girl who gave a crust to a poor man, cruelly tortured. The bed in which all strangers had to be measured, and chopped to fit... Why?

Because Sdom considered themselves a master race! They were the archetype of racism! No outsider was permitted to enjoy their prosperity. Sheli sheli; There is no obligation to share, because this land is ours alone. Their own citizens were treated well and justly! Only towards strangers were they wicked. All the stories of persecution point in the same direction: the girl they tortured to death because she gave a crust to a poor man; the bed on which they made each stranger sleep which was either too long or too short, and to fit they stretched him or decapitated him...

Why? The theory of the MASTER RACE! Racism! They felt they were better than others! No outsider to enjoy their plenty! Even though they have much and you have nothing! Sheli sheli veshelach shelach; we have no obligation to share, because the land is ours!

Racists must justify their injustice. So they build up a theology of race. They create a philosophy of the supremacy of their own state. Pharaoh began his philosophy of government which enabled him to enslave us with his fear of treachery; Haman's philosophy was based on the difference of our people, so that he accused us to the king of being different, strange, a non-productive people. Of course, in our time we are tragically familiar with Hitler's theology of Aryan supremacy. The tool of such a philosophy is the big lie. If you repeat a lie often enough, it will grow to be believed. The United Nations today is the forum for the big lies of the world. It is the big lie, which has convinced the Pope and most of the nations of the world that that we made the Arab refugees homeless. It is the big lie that has made the protocols of the Elders of Zion believed by some, and it is the big lie that has spread the blood accusation and that has made even some Jews believe it! A Jewish student once tried to choose a subject of when Jews did actually drink blood, on the basis of the blood accusation, because he said with naive conviction, "Where there's so much smoke there's surely fire..."

So it was in Sodom. The Midrash describes four types of judges: Liers, forgers, justice perverters, language twisters. These were Sdom theologians.

They twist language to their design. Democracy is imperialism. Zionism is racism. Palestinians, Hamas, Fatah, are innocent victims. Terrorists are freedom fighters. Such language-twisting judges are necessary to support the racism of Sodom!

Avraham is the very opposite. He is the symbol and epitome of hospitality. His tent was open on all sides. He prays, even for the wicked Sodom and Amora... He even prayed for his enemies, for Avimelech... Veet hanefesh asher asu becharan indicates that he cared for all people, and sought

to bring them all under the protection of Hashem's love and mercy. He was compassionate, not only for their souls, but for their physical well being. Vayaavor Avraham baaretz. What was he doing on this pilgrimage? Hesed!

Now he was 99 years old. And he is commanded milah. He is appalled! He falls on his face in protest. Till now I cared for everyone. Are You, O Lord, going to make me like Sdom, with a special covenant, as if I am better than anyone else? Are my children to close their doors on humanity?

In Germany, before Hitler, we were 1/2 of 1% of the German population, and 37% of the Nobel prize winners! Our hospitals the world over treat everyone. You have read the recent newspaper articles about the tragedies in Israel, where victims' organs were donated, and Palestinians were among the recipients, because in Israel the hospitals treat everyone on an equal basis! Blue and Yitzchok Greenberg visited the recipients, one of whom was an Arab family, tearful in their thanks, but their unspoken question, "Will you go back to your home and preach peace or continued war?" Sodom undoubtedly had hospitals, but only for their own sick!

Have you heard the report about the Arab refusal of Jewish blood to save their lives? It was written by Dan Gordon, and it appeared in The Jewish Journal on May 29, 2002. Dan Gordon is a former sergeant in the IDF, the author of five books, and a screen writer.

He was in Jenin on April 16, and was told a story by Dr. David Zangen, chief medical officer of the Israeli paratroop unit that bore the brunt of the fighting in Jenin.

Dr. Zangen said that the IDF not only worked to keep the Palestinian hospital opened, they offered the Palestinians blood for their wounded. The Palestinians refused because it was Jewish blood!!

The Israelis, who could not have been faulted for saying, "You don't like it, do without....," instead flew in 2,000 units of blood from Jordan via helicopters. In addition, they saw to it that 40 units of blood from the Mukasad Hospital in East Jerusalem went to the hospital in Ramallah and that 70 units got to the hospital in Tul Karem. And on top of that they facilitated the delivery of 1,800 units of anti-coagulants that had come from Morocco.

This information was later confirmed by Col. Arik Gordin (reserves) of the IDF Office of Military Spokesman, who supplied the exact number of units and the names of the hospitals to which they were delivered.

Dan Gordon concludes thus: "So the question to ponder... is how do you negotiate with a hatred so great that it will refuse to accept your blood, even to save its own people's lives? How does an international community vilify a nation that offers its own blood to its enemies, while its own soldiers lie dying, and that, when faced with race hatred that brands their blood unfit, diverts military flights to bring blood more suitable to the taste of those who would destroy them?"

This is the hatred of Sdom. Is it any wonder Abraham falls on his face and protests?

What is Hashem's answer?

God answers: You misunderstand. The covenant that I establish with you is not one of national pride. Ani hine beriti itach, vedayita leav hamon goyim.

I am the one who makes this covenant with you! You shall remain steadfast in your love of humanity. You shall remain an av hamon goyim, the father of a multitude of nations. Not Avram, but Avraham... You will teach your son beYitzchak yikare lecha zera... What will you teach him? laasot tzedaka umishpat, To all people...

And then Avraham is reconciled. For he knew that by choosing Israel above all other nations God did not give us a goal of power, sway or might, but rather a role of service to our fellow human beings.

We have given the world so much. By nature the Jewish heart is compassionate. Rabbi Yehuda Halevi declared that the Jew is the beating heart of humanity. I prefer to say Jew possesses a human heart; even towards animals. The "Noda Biyehuda", in a teshuva, a responsum, wrote that hunting is not a Jewish occupation.

Einstein in a discussion with Walter Rathenau, who was Chief of the German Reichstag, an extremely assimilated Jew who was assassinated by Nazis when they were on their way to power, reports that "Rathenau declared, that when a Jew says he is going hunting for pleasure, he lies!

The message of love and compassion is always on our hearts and tongue. The world won't listen, but we won't stop teaching. Venivrech becha... One day, the world will recognize the blessing we give them. Kol mishpechot haadama! All the family of man! And humanity will then become human again!

Submitted by Nisson Shulman in 5764 (as another version of the sermon entitled SERVING HUMANITY OR RULING HUMANITY, with different illustrations.)