

טועמיה - חיים

לחיות עם הזמן בשבת קודש

A Taste of Shabbat – Parshat Vayera 5778

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A home in Sodom.

When, in our parsha, the people of Sodom discover that Lot has three guests in his house they surround it

מַנְעֵר וְעַד זָקֵן כָּל הָעָם מִקְצֵהוֹ.¹

both young and old, the entire population from every end of the city

They shout at him and give an ultimatum

אֵיךְ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הוֹצִיָאם אֵלֵינוּ וְנִדְבָעָה אִתָּם.²

Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, and let us be intimate with them."

Lot goes out to them, closes his door and makes a shocking proposal

הִנֵּה נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדָעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיאָהּ נָא אֶתְהַדָּן אֵלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לֹאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵל אֶל תַּעֲשׂוּ דְבָר כִּי עַל כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצֶל קִרְתִּי.³

Behold now I have two daughters who were not intimate with a man. I will bring them out to you, and do to them as you see fit; only to these men do nothing, because they have come under the shadow of my roof."

The end of the argument is with the terrible threat used by the people of Sodom:

עֲתָה נִרְעֶה לָךְ...

Now, we will deal even worse with you than with them

This is the moment the three angels pull Lot back in to the house, close the door and miraculously deal with dangers outside.

In understanding the story, we must realize that Lot is also the "internal Lot" a force inside everyone of us and relevant today.

This is the story of the house that Lot, his wife, daughters and son in laws live. Outside is a city built on an ideology that opposes hospitality, and the people are making a protest outside the house. There is a door that provides a barrier between the outside and the inside. This is similar to the story of the flood, one family inside, evil and destruction outside. During the flood the door of the arc is closed by God for Noach, to save him. Here too the angels save Lot by closing the door that separates him from the people of Sodom, thus saving him and his family.

Lot is still looking for a way to survive outside. He sees the people of Sodom as his brothers

אֵל נָא אַחֵי תִרְעוּ.⁴

Brothers, please do not do evil!

They are not. From all of his friends and brethren, after his promotion to chief justice, after all the ideology, all that is left for Lot is his own home. His home isn't perfect either, his wife is not exactly a tzaddikah and his son-in-laws laugh at him when they hear his plans. Only his two daughters accompany him when his physical home is destroyed and it is forbidden to look back. This is the "home" that survives, and is impossible to destroy, it is the "home" Lot will pass on to his daughters without even knowing what he had done.

The end of the story is equally shocking. Lot's daughters are convinced that the world had been destroyed in a universal holocaust ...

וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל הַצְּעִירָה אָבִינוּ זָקֵן וְאִישׁ אֵין בְּאָרֶץ...⁵

¹ בראשית, י"ט, ד'.

² שם, ה'.

³ שם ח'.

⁴ שם, ז'.

⁵ שם, ל"א.



And the elder said to the younger "Our father is old, and there is no man on earth to come upon us, as is the custom of all the earth"

She thought this was the only way to continue human existence, so without Lot knowing what was going on, the house of Lot continues via Amon and Moav, Ruth from Moav and Naama from Amon up to the mashiach, son of David.

Lot thought that perhaps it was possible to save something outside the door, but it had all been destroyed. The inside of the home continues, not the physical part, the angels tell Lot not to take his possessions, only the people. Lot's home (with its hospitality) reminds him of the "House of Avraham" that he came from, this was the house the people of Sodom tried to destroy.

The Torah tells us that when the angels arrive at Lot's home he bakes... matza!

Rashi tells us "*he baked matza as it was Pesach*"⁶.

This, perhaps, is because of the similarity in the stories between the exodus, the flood and our story, the world is divided into two –outside the door and inside.

The door does not just keep the influence of the outside away. The door allows us to build a different internal world, different from the surrounding culture, an eternal world. It cannot be destroyed or taken, as it is not bricks and stone or even people, it is the essence itself. The home that will be victorious and prevail over the flood, the people of Sodom and the whole Egyptian empire

כִּי יָדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְדָּק אֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו...⁷

For I have known him because he commands his sons and his home after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord to perform righteousness and justice

⁶ רש"י, שם, ג'.

⁷ בראשית י"ח, ו"ט.