



## **Sdom: The City that Burned**

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This program is sponsored by Sarena and David Koschitzky, in memory of Riva Koschitzky z"l

This Shiur is dedicated ל"ל שמעון וברכה ז"ל

In loving memory of our dear mother Marion Bessin ז"ל

The Bessin and Aronson Families

This Shiur is dedicated by Dalia and Farokh Hakimi

in memory of Farokh's brother

Abraham Shafizadeh Hakimi ז"ל

### **1) Bereshit 13:5-13**

וַיִּגְמַלְלוּ לְלוֹט אֶת-אַבְרָם הֵנָּה צָאוּ-וַיִּבְקְרוּ וְאֵהָלִים: וְלֹא-נִשְׂאָ אִתָּם הָאָרֶץ לְשֹׁכֵת יַחְדָּו כִּי-הָיָה רְכוּשָׁם רָב וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְשֹׁכֵת יַחְדָּו: וַיְהִי-רִיב בֵּין רְעֵי מִקְנֵה-אַבְרָם וּבֵין רְעֵי מִקְנֵה-לוֹט וְהַפְּגַעְנִי וְהַפְּרָזִי אֲזַי יָשָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ: וַיֵּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל-לוֹט אֵל-נָא תְהִי מְרִיבָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ וּבֵין רְעֵי וּבֵין רְעֵיךָ כִּי-אֲנֹשִׁים אַחִים אֲנִי וְנָא כָל-הָאָרֶץ לְפָנֶיךָ הִפְרַד נָא מֵעָלַי אִם-הִשְׁמָאֵל וְאִימְנָה וְאִם-הִימִין וְאִשְׁמְאִילָה: וַיִּשְׂא-לוֹט אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת-פְּלִפְכָר הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כָלָה מִשְׁקָה לְפָנָי | שְׁחַת יְהוָה אֶת-סֹדֶם וְאֶת-עֲמֹרָה כַּגֹּז-יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם בְּאַבְרָהָם צָעַר: וַיִּבְחַר-לוֹ לְלוֹט אֶת פְּלִפְכָר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסַּע לְלוֹט מִקְדָּם וַיִּפְרְדּוּ אִישׁ מֵעַל אָחִיו: אַבְרָם יָשָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ-כְּנָעַן וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּעָרֵי הַכְּפֹר וַיֵּאֱהָל עַד-סֹדֶם: וְאֲנֹשֵׁי סֹדֶם רְעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיהוָה מְאֹד:

And also Lot, who went with Abram, had flocks and cattle and tents. And the land did not bear them to dwell together, for their possessions were many, and they could not dwell together. And there was a quarrel between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and between the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, and the Canaanites and the Perizzites were then dwelling in the land. And Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no quarrel between me and between you and between my herdsmen and between your herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not all the land before you? Please part from me; if [you go] left, I will go right, and if [you go] right, I will go left." And Lot raised his eyes, and he saw the entire plain of the Jordan, that it was

entirely watered; before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as you come to Zoar. And Lot chose for himself the entire plain of the Jordan, and Lot traveled from the east, and they parted from one another. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and he pitched his tents until Sodom. And the people of Sodom were very evil and sinful against the Lord.

## 2) Ramban Bereshit 13:12

**אברהם ישב בארץ כנען** - בשאר ארץ כנען כולה, שלא יעמוד במקום אחד, אבל בכל ארץ כנען יגור. ולוט נתישב במקום אחד ממנה בערי הכנר, כי ערי הכנר מכלל ארץ כנען

Avram dwelt in the remainder of the land of Canaan, he did not stay in one place but abode in the entire land of Canaan while Lot settled in one place, namely the cities of the plain, for the cities of the plain are part of the land of Canaan.

## 3) Clapp, Frederick G. “The Site of Sodom and Gomorrah. Diversity of Views” *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 40, no. 3, Archaeological Institute of America, 1936, pp. 323–44, <https://doi.org/10.2307/498693>.

The question of the precise location of the “Five Cities of the Plain”, of which the more notorious were Sodom and Gomorrah, has attracted attention from Bible scholars and Palestine travelers for centuries. Nearly seventy years ago Walcott, in an able article, wrote that “There is no site, ancient or modern, which combines all the elements of interest that belong to the site of Sodom and the other ‘cities of the plain’ whose destruction is recorded in the Book of Genesis.” The Moslems placed the location beneath the waters of the Dead Sea “Salt Sea” or “Bahr Lut”- the Sea of Lot- as it has been called at various times, but other writers supposed the site to be on the adjoining land at the Sea’s south end. In contrast to these opinions, some authorities have postulated the position of the settlements in question as being north of that Sea in the plain of the River Jordan.

- <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/tanakh/studies-tanakh/core-studies-tanakh/vayera-sodom-and-gomorrah>



#### 4) Bechor Shor Bereshit 13:10

לפני שחתה' וגו'. כלו' לוט בדק בארץ ולא בדק ביושבי הארץ לפיכך לקה שיצא משם באחרונה הוא ובנותיו בלא כלום כי ההולך לדור במקום צריך לבדוק בארץ וביושביה:

Lot focused on the quality and fertility of the land itself and didn't look into the inhabitants of the land

#### 5) Bereshit 12:5

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בֶּן-אָחִיו וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לְלֶכֶת אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן:

And Abram took Sarai, his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had acquired, and the souls they had acquired in Haran, and they went to go to the land of Canaan, and they came to the land of Canaan.

#### 5b) Bereshit 13:1

וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לּוֹ וְלוֹט עִמּוֹ הַנֶּגְבָה:

And Abram came up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that was his, and Lot with him, to the south.

## 6) Rashi Bereshit 13:13

ואנשי סדום רעים- ואף על פי כן לא נמנע לוט מלשכון עמהם

And yet Lot did not refrain from living with them

## 7) Radak Bereshit 13:13

ואנשי סדום רעים וחטאים- רעים לשמים ורעים לבריות והכל הוא לה, כי עברו על מצוותיו שצוה לאדם ולנח והם שבע מצוותיו ובהם עבודה זרה שהיא חטא לה ובהם גזל ועריות ושפיכות דמים חטא ורעה איש לחברו

They ignored all the 7 Noahide laws including idolatry, stealing and murder

## 8) Bereshit 18: 20-21

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וְעֹמֶרָה כִּי-רָבָה וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי כָבֵדָה מְאֹד. אֲרֹדֶה-נָא וְאֶרְאֶה הַכַּצְעָקָתָה הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ | כִּלְהָ וְאִם-לֹא אֲדַעָה:

And the Lord said, "Since the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah has become great, and since their sin has become very grave. I will descend now and see, whether according to her cry, which has come to Me, they have done; [I will wreak] destruction [upon them]; and if not, I will know."

## 9) Sanhedrin 109b

הוּא הָיָא רַבִּיתָא דְהוּת קָא מִפְקָא רִיפְתָא לַעֲנִיא בְחֻצְבָא אִיגְלָאֵי מִלְתָּא שְׁפִיזָא דּוּבְשָׂא וְאוּקְמוּהָ עַל אִיגְרָא שׁוּרָא אַתָּא זִיבּוּרִי וְאִכְלוּהָ וְהֵיִינוּ דְכָתִיב (בְּרַאשִׁית יח, כ) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וְעֹמֶרָה כִּי רַבָּה וְאִם רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב עַל עֵיסְקֵי רִיבָה:

There was a young woman who would take bread out to the poor people in a pitcher so the people of Sodom would not see it. The matter was revealed, and they smeared her with honey and positioned her on the wall of the city, and the hornets came and consumed her. And that is the meaning of that which is written: "And the Lord said: Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great [*rabba*]" (Genesis 18:20). And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: *Rabba* is an allusion to the matter of the young woman [*riva*] who was killed for her act of kindness. It is due to that sin that the fate of the people of Sodom was sealed.

### 10) Pirkei Avot 5:10

אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת בְּאָדָם. הַאֹמֵר שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי, זֶה מִדַּת סְדוֹם. שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי, עִם הָאֶרֶץ. שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי, רָשָׁע: וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי, עִם הָאֶרֶץ. חֲסִיד. שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי וְשִׁלְךָ שְׁלִי, רָשָׁע:

There are four types of character in human beings: One that says: “what’s mine is mine, and yours is yours”: this is a commonplace type; and some say this is a sodom-type of character. [One that says:] “mine is yours and yours is mine”: is an unlearned person (am haaretz); [One that says:] “mine is yours and yours is yours” is a pious person. [One that says:] “mine is mine, and yours is mine” is a wicked person.

### 11) Yechezkel 16:49

הִנֵּה-זֶה הָיָה עִוֹן סְדוֹם אַחֹתְךָ גְּאוֹן שְׁבַע-תְּלָחִים וְשִׁלּוֹת הַשִּׁקֵּט הָיָה לָהּ וְלִבְנוֹתֶיהָ וַיִּדְ-עַנִּי וְאֲבִיוֹן לֹא הִחְזִיקָה:

Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom your sister: pride, abundance of bread, and careless ease were hers and her daughters', and she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

### 12) Rabbanit Chana Henkin, Parshat Vayera Nishmat Website 1999

It is not adultery, paganism, murder, battery, or theft which caused the destruction of Sodom. It was the arrogance of the wealthy, who took it for granted that what was theirs was theirs alone, and that economic bounty need not be shared with the disadvantaged

### 13) Bereshit 19: 1-9

וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סְדֹמָה בְּעֶרְבַּי וְלוֹט יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר-סְדוֹם וַיִּרְא-לוֹט וַיִּקָּם לִקְרֹאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֲפָיִם אַרְצָה: וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה גַאֲ-אֲדֹנָי סוּרוּ נָא אֶל-בֵּית עַבְדְּכֶם וְלִינּוּ וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדַרְכְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִי בְרָחוּב גְּלִין: וַיַּפְצֵר-בָּם מְאֹד וַיִּסְרוּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה וּמִצּוֹת אָפֶה וַיֹּאכְלוּ: וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ וְאֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדוֹם נִסְבּוּ עַל-הַבַּיִת מִנְעֵר וְעַד-גֹּקוֹן כָּל-הָעָם מִקְּצֵה וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֵיךָ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה הִצִּיאָם אֵלָינוּ וַיַּגִּדְעָה אַתָּם: וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֹהִים לֹט הַפְתִּיחָה וְהִדְלַת סִגְרֵי אֶתְרֵיו: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-גַּאֲחֵי תִרְעוּ: הִנֵּה-נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיאָה-נָא אֶתְהוֹן אֵלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לֹא-תַעֲשׂוּ הָאֵל-אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ דְכָר כִּי-עַל-כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצַל קִרְתִּי: וַיֹּאמְרוּ | גִּשְׁ-הָלֵאָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֶחָד בְּאֶל-גּוֹר וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט עֲתָה נִרְעֵ לָךְ מִהֶם וַיַּפְצְרוּ בְּאִישׁ בְּלוֹט מְאֹד וַיִּגְשׂוּ לְשַׁבֵּר הַדָּלַת:

And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom, and Lot saw and arose toward them, and he prostrated himself on his face to the ground. And he said, "Behold now my lords, please turn to your servant's house and stay overnight and wash your feet, and you shall arise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will stay overnight in the street." And he urged them strongly, and they turned in to him, and came into his house, and he made them a feast, and he baked unleavened cakes, and they ate. When they had not yet retired, and the people of the city, the people of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, the entire populace from every end[of the city]. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, and let us be intimate with them." And Lot came out to them to the entrance, and he shut the door behind him. And he said, "My brethren, please do not do evil. 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."

#### **14) Bereshit 19: 15-26**

And as the dawn rose, the angels pressed Lot, saying, "Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you perish because of the iniquity of the city." But he tarried, and the men took hold of his hand and his wife's hand, and the hand of his two daughters, out of the Lord's pity for him, and they took him out and placed him outside the city. And it came to pass, when they took them outside, that he said, "Flee for your life, do not look behind you, and do not stand in the entire plain. Flee to the mountain, lest you perish." And Lot said to them, "Please, do not, O Lord. Behold now, Your servant has found favor in Your eyes, and You have increased Your kindness, which You have done with me, to sustain my soul. But I cannot flee to the mountain, lest the evil overtake me, and I die. Behold now, this city is near to flee there, and it is small. Let me please flee there. Is it not small? And my soul will survive." And he said to him, "Behold I have favored you also as regards this matter, that I will not overturn the city that you have mentioned. Hasten, flee there, for I will not be able to do anything until you arrive there." Therefore, he named the city Zoar. The sun came out upon the earth, and Lot came to Zoar. And the Lord caused to rain down upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from the Lord, from heaven. And He turned over these cities and the entire plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and the vegetation of the ground. And his wife looked from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

15) **Rashi Bereshit 19:26**

By salt had she sinned and by salt was she punished. He (Lot) said to her once: “Give a little salt to these strangers” and she answered him, “Do you mean to introduce this bad custom, also, into our city?”

16) **Bereshit 19:29**

וַיְהִי בְּשִׁחַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עָרֵי הַכְּפֹר וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־אֲבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־לוֹט מִתּוֹךְ הַהִפְכָּה בַּהֶפְךָ  
אֶת־הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־יָשַׁב בָּהֶן לוֹט:

Thus 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. From