

**THEME:**

The parasha describes the transition from **חסד** to **דין**, from **אברהם** the **אוהב** to **אברהם** the **ירא**. Here we discover the integral symbiosis of the relationship between them – the relationship of breadth to depth, of openness to precision, of multiplicity to Truth, of **הכנסת** **הלכה** to **אורחים**.

**FOCUS ON AVRAHAM**

The parasha defines the creation of **יצחק** but is completely focused on **אברהם**  
 Even the **עקידה** is from Avraham's point of view as is **סדום והמלאכים**  
 Change in **אברהם** from needs of guests to *wanting – insisting* – to slit his son's throat  
 This is the transition that allows Avraham and **חסד** the connection to **דין**  
 The ingredients appear immediately in the words that name the parasha, because **ירא וירא** means he is no longer open to everyone in need  
 A tremendous change from the original "Tent of Avraham."  
 He became *judgmental* which is the meaning of (**מעיני העדה**) **ראייה**

**PROCESS: FROM אהבה TO יראה**

There is a process here of going towards **דין**  
 There are even early arguments *against* pure **דין** in the battle of survival for Sodom: **אם דין אתה רוצה**  
 Where at the end we come to pure **דין** that questions our right to exist, no matter what our actions:  
**עקידה**  
 The Zohar says that it was specifically *Avraham* who needed to come here to **דין**  
 The **יראה** achieved here in **אתה ידעתי כי ירא א' אתה** is a profound change in a pure **אוהב**  
 Consistency from **זרע אברהם אוהבי** as it develops into **יראה**  
 The Torah comes here to address the level of *Avraham*, to show the transition to **יראה** as an inner dynamic of **אהבה** itself

**ARGUMENTS OVER DIN****סדום**

We would expect that the **דין** would be an absolute – yet for some reason the parasha is filled with arguments  
 Even the very first introduction to post-**מבול** **דין** is met with an argument  
 Shouldn't God be expected to know better whether this is **משפט**?  
 Graduated argument regarding Sodom means this was not a ritualized dialogue but a serious attempt at negotiation, Russian tactics  
 Like **ריב"ז** afraid to push too far and lose it all  
 If I can ask for a life like Yitzchak's surely I can demand the end of Sodom!  
 Avraham goes from a struggle with **דין** at **סדום** to acceptance of the **עקידה**

**AVIMELECH**

**אבימלך** does the same thing and manages to get out of the **דין**  
 "Now I believe the vicious rumors about the **מבול**!"  
 Why is it so important that Avimelech should *understand*?

**LOT**

**לוט** saves **מצער** after there has already been a decision to destroy it

After everything is changed in order to help him escape, he makes it unnecessary to escape through arguments

Arguing about whether the single year of youth should grant **מצער** a future

## שרה

Sarah argues about a *fact*: whether she laughed

**ישמעאל** as a different way to act towards **באשר הוא שם**

## PERSPECTIVES

Opening eyes of Hagar

In general, the appearance of the thing seems more important here than its reality

**מצער** relative to other cities

Lot as a **צדיק** relative to Sodom, as if he will not be noticed

Perspectives of **אבימלך** as provided him by Avraham

The answer to Avimelech – “A man hears what he wants to hear” means it was *your* decision how to handle the information

The appearance of justice

**הקדימה למצוה** out of her (mistaken) perspective

Even the doing of **חסד** itself is all appearances--Avraham needed it more than the recipients

The whole story of **חסד למלאכים** was only appearances – there *were* no guests

The entire story of the **חמה מנרתיקה** was also clearly not for real

Why not just turn down the thermostat instead of sending **מלאכים**?

Pretending to eat when no **חסד** was done?

## THE PRETENSE OF עקידה

Even the **עקידה** itself was just appearances--**הורידהו עכשיו הורידהו**

How did Avraham feel about being fooled into appearances of **חסד**

How did he feel about being fooled into **מסירות נפש** which was never required?

No, he felt fine – this is part of what he learned: that it is the appearance that counts

The **שטן** even tried to tell him – “Hey, it's all a game. In the end He will say, take him down!”

But it didn't work against Avraham, who saw this as a full expression of a Divine Attribute

## MULTIPLE VISIONS IN DIN

### MULTIPLICITY AND THE NATURE OF “JUDGMENT”

The Torah seems to make the reality of **דין** dependent on multiple visions

Obviously **אין לדיין אלא מה שעיניו רואות**

The tremendous sensitivity to slant: **שוחד, טענת בעל דין שלא בפני חבריו, עיוות, משתיק**

Judgmental judgment

**שבעים פנים לתורה ושבעים בסנהדרין** – you must have the full potential of variation in view

Unanimity is *ipso facto* wrong!

### TORAH AND MULTIPLICITY

**אין מושיבין בסנהדרין אלא מי יודע לטהר השרץ מן התורה**

**תלמידו של ר"מ שידעו לטהר השרץ במאה וחמישים דרכים**

**בעלי אסופות** as the *definition* of Torah, not as a problem in learning Torah

Multiplicity is not merely a tool to assure the truth through argumentation

Avraham's fight for **סדום** is an actual creation of alternatives

Either you hear it all or you hear nothing: **שבעים**

**ומפני מה לא קבעו הלכה כמותו**

קנה לך לב מבי"ן והטה אזניך כאפרכסת

Also reflected in אלו ואלו דברי אלוקים חיים

Seems to be exactly the same as the jokes being played by God with the עקידה: they could not understand what רבי מאיר (עירובין יג) actually meant!

In fact, the very שם of מדת הדין is in plural: בעל הכוחות

This breaking down into various possibilities and details seems to be necessary for the transition from חסד to דין

Which is the experience of the world--lawyers, the more the merrier

## RELATING אהבה ויראה

The Transition from Love to Fear

But this transition from חסד לדין on the surface seems to be a totally different way to view life.

It is the equivalent of the change from אהבה ליראה, which seems to demand a radically different focus--perhaps הכרת טובה to lead to love, and awareness of עונשין to lead to יראה, or at least כבוד ונהר דינור יראת הרוממות for הכסא

However, listen to the Rambam in יסודי התורה פרק ב (See text)

So far so good--certainly leads to appreciation of nature and the חסד of Creation.

Now, what radically different approach does he recommend to reach יראה?

וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן מיד הוא נרתע לאחורין

How is it possible that the very same issues should lead to antithetical emotion?

And why not just put it together--the following two things lead to אהבה ויראה?

But listen to the difference: מחשב vs. מתבונן.

And see how seriously he means the distinction:

ממעשה רבון העולמים כללים גדולים ולפי הדברים האלו אני מבאר  
לאהוב את השם מבינכדי שיהיו פתח ל

The specialist who attempts to control the specialty

“God is in the details” is the only way to know בריה שפלה of יראה

Without כללים גדולים you cannot appreciate the interrelationship of all possibility

The אהבה is the vision of breadth of כלל without which one cannot come to יראה

As we develop more into מדת הדין we appreciate more and more a different opinion

דין is the multitude of possible connections among a hopeless infinity of detail

Missing a single possibility of שבעים leaves the דין strangled

## THE ROAD AND GUESTS

### AVRAHAM AND THE ROAD

There is a change towards Din with the change in Avraham's habits--no more הליכה

The parasha opens with הכנסת אורחים and ends with the אשל בבאר שבע

How can he not continue his main עבודה?

Because becoming the road is the deepest הליכה

Instead the walkers and the road comes into his own home

Only now that he opens his hotel is he being מכניס אורח

The guest is called the road

### אורח הכנסת

Bringing the road into the house

Thus his tent becomes פתח עינים i.e. the place of “seeing” דין

“All the roads lead to Rome” means the world became his home

תל תלפיות similar to פתח עינים

**SODOM AND THE ROAD**

נשבית תורת רגל is not the same thing as being anti-תד

In Sodom, they did not want connection to what was different and strange

But then they cannot live במדת הדין

Not having guests means that you cannot live with דין!

שלי שלי ושליך שליך is only because they have no הכנסת אורחים

The broader the openness the deeper the connection to Din

**THE MAP CALLED TORAH**

The roads are interrelated only through the totality of the map

Why "verter" can be dangerous

דעת תורה means that each detail becomes a new way of seeing all reality

Just as one new detail of nature may force change in my entire vision of reality

Why the הלכה is כבית הלל

Does this mean that we follow the "nice guy" in determining the הלכה?

It is הליכה that matters to הלכה and therefore the fewer the אורחים the less the הלכה כמותו

One who wishes to go from אהבה to יראה, from כלל to detail; from making sure to further life

(אהבה) to seeing to it that each thing has a place (יראה), must be able to be מכניס אורח in the

literal sense and in the שומע דברי המטהרים ודברי המטמאים

"From this too arises the extreme importance of collaborations in many scientific discoveries – and the importance of conversation, of travel of visits by scientist to the laboratories of colleagues and competitors. Great laboratories become great and remain so for a while because, among other reasons, they attract the right visitors. Repeatedly, when one analyzes the fine grain of the events leading to some discovery, one sees what I call the shuttle effect – in which the physical arrival of a new person brings together the necessary elements."

HORACE FREELAND JUDSON, *The Search for Solutions*