

PARASHAT VAYEIRA
OLAM CHESSED YIBANEH
RABBI BARUCH SIMON

*“Vayikrau el Lot va’yomeinu lo, ayey ha’anashim asher ba’u eilecha halayla, hotzi’aim eleinu **venedaah otam**” (Vayeira 19:5)*

At first glance, one might think that there was sexual immorality in Sedom.

“Va’anshei Sedom raim vechataim le’Hashem me’od” (Lech Lecha 13:13)

The **Medresh Rabbah** says that they were bad to one another, sinners (gilui arayos), and they also killed people. This fits in well with the first passuk. The Ramban says the point that they wanted to get the people out of Lot’s house was not for the sexual pleasure, they said that they had a beautiful land and they were afraid that everyone was going to come visit. And they hated to do tzedaka so they felt that Lot was doing an act of tzedaka so they wanted to get them out. But Lot himself is a new comer! Maybe he was rich, special permission, related to Avraham.

The passuk in **Yechezkel** says that Sedom was full of bread and they had all the peace and tranquility but they would not give anything to the poor people. They hated chessed and they would oppress the poor.

The question is why does the medresh say they did all these aveiras but the passuk in Yechezkul only says one? They did everything, even though they were engaged in the worst things (which look worse) the sin of oppressing the poor was a sin that was done all the time.

Rav Henech Lebowitz says if you want to define a person who he really is, is what he does in a regular basis. Everyone could do an aveira sometimes, or a mitzva sometimes, those don’t count in the characteristic of a person. Only what he does all the time.

It says in **Tehillim** that Dovid Hamelech loves everyone even though they hate him, and he still will daven for them. “Ani Tefilah”. What does that mean? R’ Akiva Eiger says if you daven all the time, then we don’t say you are an “Ish Tefilla” you are tefilla because that is what is done consistently.

Pirkei Avos says there are 4 types of people- what’s mine is mine, what’s yours is yours- this is middas sedom. What was so bad of the city, if the whole city did not do chessed, the city wouldn’t be destroyed. But the reason why it was destroyed was because in their city doing chessed was part of the rules, they were against doing it, it was a forbidden thing to do and that’s what led to their destruction

Sedom was destroyed by fire and salt. The **Rugachover** says fire consumed Sedom and

Gemorrah but not any of the other 3 cities. (City that serves avodah zara is destroyed- ir nidachas). So Sedom and Gemorrah had the halacha of an ir nidachas. Burning is only in the Torah by Sedom and Gemorrah because they were the only cities that had this halacha of an Ir Nidachas.

The Rambam says in the Moreh Nevuchim is not only if one city violates avoda zara. If the whole city violates one specific commandment in the Torah, they are merited to be destroyed. \

When Avraham Avinu was davening for Sedom, Hashem said if you find 5 tzaddikim in the city Hashem would save him. The Ibn Ezra says what does it mean “in the city”. 5 tzaddikim who prominently worship Hashem in public- involved in the community. If there are 5 tzaddikim that are willing to influence others, then there would be hope for the city, if not, then no.

Just because a person does something, its not his essence. Essence is something that you do all the time on a continual basis and that is what makes a difference in a person.