



Parshat VaYeira 20 Cheshvan 5784 – November 4, 2023

What is the definition of evil? The dictionary definition of evil is “profoundly immoral and wicked.” The Torah described evil in the time of Noah, just before the flood, as “chamas,” meaning violence. At this juncture of the Torah, we see the wickedness of the five cities of S’dom, Amora, Adma, Tzvoyim, and Tzoar.

What is the wickedness of these five cities? The Torah is specific, “And the men of S’dom were exceedingly evil and sinful before HaShem.” The same was true of the four surrounding cities. They were murderers, morally debased, and rebelled against HaShem.

What caused the people of these cities to become so evil? They were the wealthiest in the world with the most fertile land. Not only was the land fertile but it was also blessed with great natural resources. When a servant picked vegetables from the ground, gold emerged. They did not thank HaShem for their abundance. Rather than have faith in HaShem, they had faith in themselves and their wealth.

Some laws of S’dom:

1. A stranger could be robbed and beaten.
2. Every judge of S’dom must ensure that every stranger leaves with nothing.
3. Anyone giving food to a stranger will be punished with death.
4. Lying.

Their evil brought about their destruction. We learn that HaShem warned them of their demise 25 years earlier. HaShem caused earthquakes and tremors to try to warn them and bring them to repentance. They paid no attention and continued their evil path.

Everyone is given a choice of what path to take. S’dom chose their path and even when Avraham defended the city for ten righteous individuals to save them, ten didn’t exist. When we are given paths to choose from, think hard and follow the path of HaShem.

Good Shabbos!

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