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NEWS & VIEWS

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Blog Edition



Posts from this [Hebrew College-hosted blog](#) are published weekly in [Patheos](#).

The Call to Protest

Parashat Vayera (Genesis 18:1-22:24)

By Rabbi Dr. Michael Shire
Chief Academic Officer, Hebrew College



The call to protest grows larger each day. From the women's march in Washington in January 2016 to the climate change rallies around the world, to the #MeToo movement and anti-sexual harassment demonstrations, to vigils protesting the separation of children from their parents in immigration detention. From concern at the rise in antisemitism worldwide, to outrage of the treatment of journalists uncovering truth in the face of unbridled power. We are overwhelmed at the work that needs to be done, work that perhaps some of us thought had been resolved but that has become urgent once again.

In this week's Torah portion, Abraham makes the ultimate protest by challenging God's intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. God declares that the outrage of the inhabitants of these cities is so great and their sin so grave that God will destroy them utterly (Genesis 18:20). Abraham feels compelled to plead for their lives posing the moral dilemma, "Will you sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?" But their sin is so grave, it takes Abraham bargaining with God over how many innocent ones will allay God's destructive force. Abraham forcefully argues, "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Gen 18:25) Abraham calls God to account for being a God of justice and God is moved to respond to this human cry for compassion. Here it seems Abraham is acting as God's teacher instructing God in God's own natural law, for the innocent cannot be held accountable for the grievous sin of the guilty.

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"Israel's Multiple Dimensions"

Oct. 28-31 at Hebrew College

[Information & Registration](#)

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Nov. 1 at Temple Emanuel

8 pm | Free

Co-sponsors: Hebrew College & Temple Emanuel

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Imilonji KaNtu Choral Society

Nov. 8 - Workshop & Concert

Workshop 4-6 p.m. | Free

Concert 7:30 p.m. | \$10

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Ta Sh'ma: Fall Ordination Programs

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Nov. 12 | Hebrew College

[Information and Registration](#)

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9:30 a.m. | \$100 per person

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"Credit to the Nation: East European Jewish Immigrant Bankers, Mass Migration and American Finance"

Co-sponsored by [Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston](#) and Hebrew College

Dec. 16 | 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. | Free

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