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Why Do Men Really Hate?, 1963.

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SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE
March 10, 1963
DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

WHY DO MEN REALLY HATE?
A Purim Sermon

IN THE MEGILAH OF ESTHER WHICH IS READ IN OUR SYNAGOGUES ON PURIM, THERE ARE FOUR PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS, AHASHVERUS AND HAMAN, MORDECAI AND ESTHER. THE FIRST TWO ILLUSTRATE THE NATURE OF HATE, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF HATE. THE LATTER TWO ILLUSTRATE THE NATURE OF LOVE, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF LOVE.

AHASHVERUS, THE RABBIS SAID, WAS A FOOL -- *והוא לבב חולב* -- HAMAN, THE MEGILAH DESIGNATES AS A KNAVE -- A WICKED MAN --

והוא לבב חולב MORDECAI'S NAME, THE RABBIS SUGGESTED, INDICATED THAT HE WAS AS REFINED AND NOBLE AS PURE MYRRH; AND ESTHER'S NAME CALLS TO MIND THE MORNING-STAR, WHICH SHEDS ITS LIGHT AFTER ALL THE OTHER STARS HAVE CEASED TO SHINE.

WHY DID THE RABBIS REGARD THE GREAT AHASHVERUS, WHO RULED OVER A VAST EMPIRE OF ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY PROVINCES FROM INDIA TO ETHIOPIA A FOOL? NOT ONLY BECAUSE HE WAS UNSTABLE, INTEMPERATE, ^{and} EASILY SWAYED BY CUNNING COURTIER, BUT BECAUSE HE GAVE WAY TO BLIND HATRED WHEN HIS PRIDE WAS HURT. THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE MEGILAH TELLS THE STORY OF HOW THE MIGHTIEST RULER OF THE EARTH ALLOWED A SENSE OF OUTRAGED DIGNITY, ^{FOR} WHICH HE WAS HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE, ^{downfall} TO CAUSE THE DEATH OF HIS QUEEN. AHASHVERUS AND HIS BOON COMPANIONS, THE PRINCES AND

NOBLES OF HIS REALM, HAD BEEN ENJOYING A SEVEN-DAY FEAST IN THE GARDEN^S OF THE KING'S PALACE, WHERE ROYAL WINE WAS IN ABUNDANCE, AND DRINKING^{was} UNCONFINED. THE KING WAS IN HIGH SPIRITS, AND WHEN HIS HEART WAS MERRY WITH WINE, HE BOASTED BEFORE HIS GUESTS THAT HIS QUEEN VASHTI WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE WORLD -- AND TO PROVE HIS POINT HE HAD THE QUEEN SUMMONED TO DISPLAY TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PRINCES HER BEAUTY -- WITHOUT ANY APPAREL WHATSOEVER, THE COMMENTATORS ADD.

THE QUEEN REFUSED TO COME. IN SO MANY WORDS SHE TOLD THE MESSENGERS WHO CAME TO FETCH HER: " SAY TO AHASHVERUS --HAVE YOU LOST YOUR REASON BY TOO MUCH DRINKING? I AM VASHTI, THE DAUGHTER OF BELSHAZZAR, WHO WAS A SON OF NEBECHADNEZZAR WHO ^{was so ugly} SCOFFED AT KINGS AND UNTO WHOM PRINCES WERE A DERISION, AND EVEN YOU WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN DEEMED WORTHY TO RUN BEFORE MY FATHER'S CHARIOT ^{or} A COURIER. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY DEMANDING THAT I APPEAR NAKED IN PUBLIC?!"

^{At this} THE KING BECAME VERY WROTH AND HIS ANGER BURNED IN HIM. VASHTI HAD HURT HIS PRIDE. SHE HAD MADE HIM CONTEMPTIBLE IN THE EYES OF HIS SUBJECTS. THEY ARE PROBABLY LAUGHING AT ME AT THIS VERY MOMENT, HE THOUGHT. WHAT OF MY MAJESTY? WHAT OF MY DIGNITY? HOW DARED SHE DO SUCH A THING TO ME -- HER HUSBAND AND HER KING? INSTANTLY HIS LOVE FOR HER AND HIS PRIDE IN HER TURNED TO HATE. AND GOADED ON BY HIS COUNSELORS, SOME OF WHOM PRESUMABLY HAD TROUBLES OF THEIR OWN WITH WIVES WHO WERE NOT

submit
TOO OBEDIENT TO THEIR AUTHORITY, HE BANISHED VASHTI FROM HIS PRESENCE AND GAVE HER ROYAL ESTATE TO ANOTHER. SOME SAY HE HAD HER PUT TO DEATH. *Later* AND THIS FOOLISH KING, WHO WAS BETRAYED BY HIS OWN FOLLY, ACTUALLY HAD A DECREE ISSUED AND PUBLISHED THROUGHOUT HIS KINGDOM THAT HEREAFTER EVERY MAN SHOULD BE MASTER IN HIS OWN HOUSE, AND THAT ALL WIVES SHOULD HENCEFORTH GIVE HOMAGE AND OBEY THEIR HUSBANDS, BOTH GREAT AND SMALL. HOW SILLY CAN A MAN GET!

HERE IS ONE ILLUSTRATION OF WHY MEN HATE. HURT PRIDE! MEN AND WOMEN ARE LIKELY TO FORGET ALMOST ANY *hurt* HARM WHICH IS DONE TO THEM, BUT NOT WHEN THEIR PRIDE IS HURT. THEIR PRIDE MAY BE A FALSE PRIDE, OR AN IMAGINARY ONE -- IT DOES NOT MATTER. A MORTAL BLOW HAS BEEN STRUCK AT THEIR EGO, THEIR COVETED STATUS AND SELF-ESTEEM. THEIR ARMOR HAS BEEN PIERCED. THEY HAVE BEEN MADE VULNERABLE AND EVEN CONTEMPTIBLE, THEY FEAR, IN THE SIGHT OF MEN. AND SO THEY HATE WITH AN UNREASONABLE *ing* HATE THOSE WHO HAVE BROUGHT THIS SHAME AND HUMILIATION UPON THEM AND THEY PROCEED TO VENT THEIR DUDGEON AND THEIR BLIND FURY UPON THEIR VICTIMS.

BUT SUPPOSE A MAN WERE NOT OBSESSED WITH FALSE PRIDE AND VANITY. SUPPOSE HIS PEACE OF MIND AND SERENITY OF SPIRIT DID NOT DEPEND UPON THE OPINION WHICH OTHER MEN HAD OF HIM. SUPPOSE HE WAS ENSCONCED IN HIS OWN INTEGRITY AND CONFIDENT THAT HIS

WORK, WHATEVER IT WAS, WAS INTRINSICALLY GOOD, AND THE INTERESTS AND ENTERPRISES OF HIS LIFE WERE SO SUFFICIENTLY WORTH-WHILE THAT HE NEED NOT BE CONCERNED WITH WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT OF HIM, AND THAT HE NEED NOT MAINTAIN A FACADE, A PRECARIOUS POSTURE IN THEIR EYES. WOULD SUCH A MAN FEEL CRUSHED AND RE-BUFFED WHEN SOMEONE CROSSED HIM OR DENIED HIM, OR SHARPLY CRITICIZED HIM? WOULD HE COME TO HATE THOSE WHO DISAGREED WITH HIM OR DISOBEYED HIM OR REPROVED HIM WITH A DESTROYING HATRED AS THOUGH THEY HAD ROBBED HIM OF SOMETHING VERY PRECIOUS TO HIM AND INDISPENSABLE TO HIS SELF-RESPECT, HIS INNER DIGNITY, HIS SELF-ESTEEM?

AHASHVERUS WAS A FOOL, BUT HAMAN WAS A HOSTILE AND WICKED MAN. IN HIM THE HATE WHICH ALSO DERIVED FROM HURT PRIDE SWELLED, EXPANDED AND PROLIFERATED UNTIL IT INCLUDED FALSEHOOD, CALUMNY, AND DECEPTION, UNTIL IT EMBRACED NOT ONLY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO HURT HIS PRIDE BUT THE ENTIRE RACE TO WHICH THAT INDIVIDUAL BELONGED.

HAMAN WAS EVIDENTLY AN UPSTART. HE HAD BEEN PROMOTED BY THE KING AND ADVANCED TO A VERY HIGH POSITION ABOVE ALL OTHER PRINCES. HE WAS GREATLY PUFFED UP BY THE HIGH HONOR WHICH HAD COME TO HIM. HE LOVED TO HAVE PEOPLE BOW DOWN TO HIM AND PROSTRATE THEMSELVES BEFORE HIM. WHEN HE WAS TOLD THAT MORDECAI, THE JEW, DID NOT BOW DOWN TO HIM, HE BECAME FULL OF

Wrath.

ONE CAN IMAGINE HOW HIS ANGER BOILED OVER WHEN SOMEWHAT LATER THE KING CONSULTED HIM ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO THE MAN WHOM THE KING DELIGHTS TO HONOR. THE KING HAD READ ONE NIGHT, WHEN HE COULD NOT SLEEP, IN THE CHRONICLES OF THE REALM, THAT A CERTAIN MORDECAI HAD SAVED HIS LIFE BY REVEALING A PLOT AGAINST HIM. ^{el} ~~II~~ HAMAN, IN HIS SELF-CENTERED EGOISM, QUICKLY JUMPED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE KING HAD HIM IN MIND. HE, THEREFORE, QUICKLY RESPONDED: "LET HIM ^{that man} BE DRESSED IN THE ROYAL APPAREL WHICH THE KING WEARS AND LET HIM BE PLACED ON THE HORSE WHICH THE KING RIDES, AND LET A ROYAL CROWN BE SET UPON HIS HEAD, AND LET ONE OF THE KING'S MOST NOBLE PRINCES LEAD HIM IN STATE THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY AND PROCLAIM: "THIS SHALL BE DONE TO THE MAN WHOM THE KING DELIGHTS TO HONOR." BUT WHEN THE KING SAID: "MAKE HASTE, AND DO WHAT YOU HAVE JUST NOW SUGGESTED TO MORDECAI", HAMAN WAS, OF COURSE, SHOCKED AND SHATTERED. AFTER HE ^{had} LED MORDECAI, WHOM HE ALREADY HATED, THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY, HE FELT ^{utterly} DISGRACED AND DEGRADED. HE HASTENED, ^{and} ASHAMED, WITH HIS HEAD COVERED, TO HIS HOUSE. HIS HATRED KNEW NO BOUNDS. IT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH TO LAY HANDS ON MORDECAI ALONE. ALL OF MORDECAI'S RACE THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE KINGDOM MUST BE DESTROYED! ^{IT} IN HAMAN WE SEE THE PROTOTYPE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HITLER. HE IS THE FIRST ADVOCATE OF GENOCIDE! DESTROY AN ENTIRE PEOPLE TO SATISFY YOUR PERSONAL GRUDGE AND ^{be sure to} RATIONALIZE YOUR HATRED

TO THE WORLD. HAMAN FORMULATED THE FIRST GENOCIDE PROPOGANDA^{national} WHICH WAS COPIED IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER BY ALL SUBSEQUENT ENEMIES OF THE JEWS: "THERE IS A CERTAIN PEOPLE", HE TOLD THE KING, "SCATTERED ABROAD AND DISPERSED AMONG THE PEOPLES IN ALL THE PROVINCES OF YOUR KINGDOM; THEIR LAWS ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF EVERY OTHER PEOPLE; THEY DO NOT KEEP THE KING'S LAWS. THEREFORE IT DOES NOT PROFIT THE KING TO SUFFER THEM TO LIVE. " "IF IT PLEASE THE KING, LET A DECREE BE ISSUED THAT THEY BE DESTROYED. " HAMAN REVEALED NOTHING OF HIS REAL MOTIVES^{to the king} PERSONAL GRUDGE, SLEEN, MALICE AND REVENGE. NO, THE STATE WAS IN DANGER. LET THE KING BEWARE AND TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT HIS KINGDOM.

THE FOOLISH KING, TO WHOM A NUMBER OF PEOPLE MORE OR LESS IN HIS VAST EMPIRE^{realm} WAS OF LITTLE ACCOUNT, TOLD HAMAN TO GO AHEAD AND DO WITH THOSE JEWS AS HE WISHED.

WHY DID HAMAN HATE SO VIOLENTLY? HE MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIBLY INSECURE IN HIMSELF. HE DID NOT FEEL EQUAL TO THE HIGH POST TO WHICH HE HAD BEEN SUDDENLY ELEVATED. HE^{probably} KNEW HIMSELF TO BE INFERIOR AND INADEQUATE. ANY OUTWARD INDICATION THAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT SO TOO, FRIGHTENED HIM AND ANGERED HIM. FORTH- WITH, AS-IF IN SELF DEFENCE, HE RESOLVED TO LIQUIDATE THEM AND ERADICATE EVERY TRACE OF THEM. ^{these people who were a threat to him}


THIS MAD HATE, THIS PARANOIA, BROUGHT ON BY HURT PRIDE AND SICKLY APPREHENSION, MIGHT HAVE DESTROYED AN ENTIRE PEACEFUL AND LAW-ABIDING PEOPLE, INNOCENT OF ANY WRONG-DOING. THE PROVIDENTIAL INTERVENTION OF TWO PEOPLE WHO DID NOT HATE BUT WHO LOVED, AVERTED THE KIND OF GHASTLY TRAGEDY WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS NOT AVERTED IN HITLER'S DAY. HAMAN'S HATEFUL DESIGN BOOMERANGED AND DESTROYED HIM ^{Self} AND HIS ^{own} HOUSEHOLD.

THIS KIND OF HATE IS NOT UNIQUE WITH ANY ONE MAN OR WITH ANY ONE AGE. IT MANIFESTS ITSELF SOMETIMES IN MASSES OF PEOPLE. A PEOPLE CAN GO MAD WITH UNREASONABLE HATE WHEN ITS PRIDE IS HURT OR WHEN IT HAS SUFFERED DEFEAT ^{and sometimes under} OR WHEN IT THINKS ^{that} ITS POSITION ^{is} ENDANGERED.

WE HAD A MANIFESTATION OF IT A FEW YEARS AGO IN LITTLE ROCK AND MORE RECENTLY AT OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI. IN LAST MONTH'S "ATLANTIC MONTHLY" MAGAZINE, ARCHIBALD MACLEISH WROTE AN ARTICLE WHICH HE CALLED "MUST WE HATE"? I QUOTE FROM THIS ARTICLE:

"I THINK, FOR MYSELF, WHAT SHOCKED ME, SICKENED ME, WAS THE BLACK PIT OF PUBLIC HATRED INTO WHICH I LOOKED. I HAD KNOWN, OF COURSE, THAT RACIAL HATRED EXISTED IN THIS COUNTRY AS IT EXISTS ELSEWHERE. ^{in our own country}

I KNEW, OF COURSE, THAT THERE WERE PRESUMABLY EDUCATED AND VISIBLY WELL-TO-DO MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SOUTH AND ELSEWHERE WHO LOOKED DOWN ON NEGROES, BECAUSE I HAD MET SUCH MEN AND WOMEN.

I KNEW THERE WERE COLLEGE GRADUATES WITH ENOUGH INTELLIGENCE TO WRITE BOOKS WHO BELIEVED, OR SAID THEY BELIEVED, THAT ALL NEGROES ARE BIOLOGICALLY INFERIOR TO ALL WHITES. I REALIZED THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO CALLED THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS WHO KNEW THAT GOD INTENDED THE BLACK MAN TO BE A HEWER OF WOOD AND A DRAWER OF WATER TO THE WHITE MAN, ANY WHITE MAN OF ANY QUALIFICATIONS OR NONE -- PARTICULARLY NONE. BUT I ALSO BELIEVED THESE PEOPLE TO BE WHAT THEY SO OBVIOUSLY WERE -- WAIFS AND STRAYS FROM THE GREAT PROCESS OF HISTORY WHO NEEDED TO FIND SOMEBODY OR OTHER TO LOOK DOWN ON IN ORDER TO LOOK UP TO THEMSELVES. AND I NEVER DOUBTED THAT IN AN ACTUAL TEST BETWEEN THESE PETULANT OPINIONS ON THE ONE SIDE AND THE REPUBLIC ON THE OTHER THE OPINIONS WOULD WITHER AWAY IN SHAME AND DISAPPEAR. BUT WHAT HAPPENED IN OXFORD WAS THAT THEY DID NOT WITHER AWAY. THEY STARED BACK AT YOU OUT OF YOUNG MEN'S FACES UGLY WITH SPITE. THEY SPAT BACK AT YOU OUT OF THE FACES OF MIDDLE-AGED MEN WHOSE WORDS WOULD HAVE BEEN INCREDIBLE IF YOU HAD NOT HEARD THEM. "THE KEY SENTENCE ^{to which} I SHOULD LIKE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO: 

"BUT I ALSO BELIEVED THESE PEOPLE TO BE WHAT THEY SO OBVIOUSLY WERE -- WAIFS AND STRAYS FROM THE GREAT PROCESS OF HISTORY WHO NEEDED TO FIND SOMEBODY OR OTHER TO LOOK DOWN ON IN ORDER TO LOOK UP TO THEMSELVES."

THE DRIVING MOTIVE BEHIND THEIR HATRED WAS NOT JAMES MEREDITH, THE NEGRO WHO ^{had} APPLIED FOR ADMISSION AND WHOM NOT A SINGLE STUDENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI HAD EVER SEEN. "NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF THE MOB WHICH RIOTED THAT NIGHT COULD HAVE TOLD YOU WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE. IT WAS ENOUGH THAT HE WAS A NEGRO." BY SEEKING ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY HE WAS ASSERTING HIS EQUALITY AS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, HE WAS ROBBING THE WHITE MAN, HE WAS DEPRIVING HIM ^{the white man} OF THE CHERISHED PRIDE OF HIS ^{assumed} SUPERIOR STATUS, ^{his privilege} HE WAS BEING MADE EQUAL WITH THE NEGRO WHOSE LOW DEGREE ^{had} AUTOMATICALLY LIFTED HIM UP IN HIS OWN ESTIMATION. THIS THREATENED A LOSS OF STATUS ^{and} DROVE THE MISSISSIPPIANS, FROM THEIR GOVERNOR DOWN, TO DEFY OPENLY AND RECKLESSLY THE CONSTITUTION AND THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, ^{to defy} UNITED STATES MARSHALS AND UNITED STATES TROOPS -- AND ALL THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND TRADITIONS OF A FREE AMERICA. ^{brutal} This made them ruthless and

FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR LAND WHO DO NOT HATE -- AND THEY ARE IN THE MAJORITY. FORTUNATELY, FOR US, EVERY AGE PRODUCES LEADERS AND DISCIPLES, LIKE MORDECAI AND ESTHER LONG AGO IN ANCIENT PERSIA, WHO ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT ^{persons who are thinking of themselves} STATUS, BUT WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH THE RIGHTS OF ^{other} MEN, EVEN OF THOSE WHO BELONG TO MINORITIES. MORDECAI WAS AN INDEPENDENT SPIRIT, A LOYAL JEW, WHO LOVED HIS PEOPLE. ^{who would not bend the knee to any one but God.} AS SOON AS HE HEARD OF THE DECREE OF EXTERMINATION WHICH HAD BEEN ISSUED AGAINST HIS PEOPLE, HE WENT INTO ACTION. HE SENT WORD TO ESTHER, HIS

ORPHANED COUSIN WHOM HE HAD ADOPTED AS HIS DAUGHTER, AND WHO
WAS NOW THE QUEEN OF AHASHVERUS, HAVING DISPLACED VASHTI; *and called*
upon her FORTHWITH TO GO TO THE KING, TO GO TO HIM EVEN IF NOT SUMMONED,
she was EVEN IF IT PUT HER LIFE IN JEOPARDY, AND REVEAL HER IDENTITY AS
He told her to A JEWESS AND *to* PLEAD FOR THE LIVES OF HER PEOPLE. AND *Esther,* RISKING
EVERYTHING, HER POSITION AS QUEEN, HER LIFE, ESTHER WENT TO
Yes THE KING. LOVE AND LOYALTY CONQUERED ALL FEAR. *She, too, was not thinking of herself* AND BECAUSE OF
HER INTERCESSION, THE DEATH DECREE WAS ANNULLED. *and the paper*
was saved.

THERE IS NO CURE FOR HATE BUT LOVE. WHEN MAN STOPS
THINKING OF HIMSELF -- HIS REPUTATION, HIS STATUS, HIS *pride,* LUSTER,
HIS RIGHTS -- AND BEGINS TO THINK OF OTHERS AND WHAT HE CAN DO,
NOT TO THEM BUT FOR THEM, HE CEASES TO HATE. "I DESTROY MY
ENEMY", SAID ABRAHAM LINCOLN, "WHEN I MAKE HIM MY FRIEND!"