
Ten righteous people!

Rabbi Alon Meltzer

A New Page of Talmud

—

Vayeira 5782



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?" And the LORD answered, "If I find within the city of Sodom fifty innocent ones, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." – **Bereshit 18:25-26**¹

Everyone who can protest the sin of his household and does not, is responsible for the people of his household. For the people of his city, he is responsible for the people of his city. For the whole world, he is responsible for the whole world...– **Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 54b**² If one could protest, but neither protests nor pays attention to acts by sinful people, then it is akin to flattery, because the sinners think [to themselves]: since they are neither protesting nor reproaching us, all our deeds are good. And we were commanded to destroy evil among us, as it is written "and you will burn the evil in your midst" (Deut. 13:6). – **Orchot Tzadikim 24:16-17**³ Now we understand the reason for the unique praise attributed to our patriarchs [and matriarchs]: not only were they righteous and pious and not only did they love God to their fullest abilities, but, in addition, they were *upright*. That is to say, they accustomed themselves to deal straightforwardly with other people, not only because it is honest to do so, but also because they realized that this positive way of relating to people bestows the continuity of existence on creation. Even idol

worshippers, despite their low and despicable spiritual level, were treated with love and concern for their well-being by our patriarchs [and matriarchs].– **HaEmek Davar introduction to Bereshit**⁴

To President John F. Kennedy, The White House, June 16, 1963. I look forward to privilege of being present at meeting tomorrow at 4 p.m. Likelihood exists that Negro problem will be like the weather. Everybody talks about it but nobody does anything about it. Please demand of religious leaders personal involvement not just solemn declaration. We forfeit the right to worship God as long as we continue to humiliate negroes. Churches synagogues have failed. They must repent.

What if 10 people are found there?...
אולי ימצאון שם עשרה
Bereshit 18:32

Ask of religious leaders to call for national repentance and personal sacrifice.– **Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Telegram to JFK**⁵ You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say– **Dr Martin Luther King Jr.**⁶