

Biblical Roots of Anti-Semitism

Marc Gitler

7/23/24

שבת

אָמַר לִיהֵא הָהוּא מְרַבֵּן לְרַב כְּהֵנָּא: מִי שְׁמִיעַ לָךְ מַאי "הַר סִינַי"? אָמַר לִיהֵא: הַר שְׁנַעְשׂוּ בּוֹ נִסִּים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. "הַר נִיסַאי" מִיבְּעֵי לִיהֵא! אָלָּא: הַר שְׁנַעְשׂוּהָ סִימָן טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. "הַר סִימַנַאי" מִיבְּעֵי לִיהֵא! אָמַר לִיהֵא: מַאי טַעְמָא לָא שְׂכִיחַתָּ קַמִּיהָ דְרַב פֶּפְא וְרַב הוֹנָא בְּרִיהַ דְרַב יְהוֹשֻׁעַ דְּמַעֲיָנִי בְּאַגְדָתָא? דְרַב חֲסֵדָא וְרַבָּה בְּרִיהַ דְרַב הוֹנָא דְאַמְרֵי תְרוּוּיָהּ: מַאי "הַר סִינַי"? הַר שְׁיַרְדָּה שְׁנָאָה לְאַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם עָלָיו

One of the Sages said to Rav Kahana: Did you hear what is the reason that the mountain was called Mount Sinai? Rav Kahana said to him: It is because it is a mountain upon which miracles [nissim] were performed for the Jewish people. The Sage said to him: If so, it should have been called Mount Nisai, the mountain of miracles. Rather, Rav Kahana said to him: It is a mountain that was a good omen [siman] for the Jewish people. The Sage said to him: If so, it should have been called Har Simanai, the mountain of omens. Rav Kahana said to him: What is the reason that you do not frequent the school where you can study before Rav Pappa and Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, who study aggada? As Rav Hisda and Rabba, son of Rav Huna, both said: What is the reason it is called Mount Sinai? It is because it is a mountain upon which hatred [sina] came down to the nations of the world.

שמות

וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חֲדָשׁ עַל-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַע אֶת-יֹסֵף: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-עַמּוֹ הַזֶּה עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעַצּוּם מְאֹד: תְּבַה גַּת-חַכְמָה לּוֹ פֹּר־יִרְפָּה וְהִלָּה כִּי-תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסַף גַּם-הוּא עַל-שְׂנְאֵינּוּ וְנִלְחַם-בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן-הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ עָלָיו שְׂרָי מִסִּים לְמַעַן עַנְתּוּ בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיָּבֹן עָרֵי מִסְכְּנוֹת לְפָרְעֹה אֶת-פֶּתֶם וְאֶת-רַעַמְסֵס:

A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, **the Israelite people** are much too numerous for us.

Let us deal shrewdly with them, so that they may not increase; otherwise in the event of war they may join our enemies in fighting against us and rise from the ground.” So they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor; and they built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses.

בראשית

ל"ט

וַיְהִי כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֹא הַבְּיֹתָהּ לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלֹאכְתּוֹ וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת שָׁם בַּבַּיִת:

וַתִּתְּפָשֶׂהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׂכָבָה עִמִּי וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיֵּצֵא הַחֹצֵה

וַיְהִי כִּי־רָאוּתָהּ כִּי־עָזַב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיֵּצֵא הַחֹצֵה: וַתִּקְרָא לְאֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לֵאמֹר רְאוּ

הַבֵּיא לְנוּ אִישׁ עֹבְרֵי לְצַחֵק בָּנוּ כִּי אֵלַי לְשֹׁכֵב עִמִּי וְאֶקְרָא בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל:

וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַעוּ כִּי־הִרְמִיתִי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיֵּצֵא הַחֹצֵה:

One such day, he came into the house to do his work. None of the household being there inside, she caught hold of him by his garment and said, “Lie with me!” But he left his garment in her hand and got away and fled outside. When she saw that he had left it in her hand and had fled outside, she called out to her servants and said to them, “Look, he had to bring us a Hebrew to dally with us! This one came to lie with me; but I screamed loud. And when he heard me screaming at the top of my voice, he left his garment with me and got away and fled outside.”

מ"א

וַיְדַבֵּר שָׂר הַמִּשְׁקִים אֶת־פְּרֻעָה לֵאמֹר אֶת־חֲטָאִי אָנִי מְזַכִּיר הַיּוֹם:

פְּרֻעָה קִצְרָה עַל־עַבְדֶּיךָ וַיִּתֵּן אֹתִי בְּמִשְׁמֶר בַּיִת שָׂר הַטַּבָּחִים אֹתִי וְאֵת שָׂר הָאֲפִים:

וּבַחֲלֻמָּה חֲלוּם בְּלֵילָה אֶחָד אָנִי וְהוּא אִישׁ כְּפִתְרוֹן חֲלָמוֹ חֲלָמָנוּ:

וְלָשׁם אֲמָנוּ נֶעַר עֲבָרִי עָבַד לְשָׂר הַטַּבָּחִים וְנִסְפָּר־לִי וּיְפָתֵר־לְבוֹ אֶת־חֲלָמֵתִינוּ אִישׁ כְּחֲלָמוֹ
פָּתַר:

The chief cupbearer then spoke up and said to Pharaoh, “I must make mention today of my offenses. Once Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and placed me in custody in the house of the prefect, together with the chief baker. We had dreams the same night, he and I, each of us a dream with a meaning of its own. A Hebrew youth was there with us, a servant of the prefect; and when we told him our dreams, he interpreted them for us, telling each of the meaning of his dream. And as he interpreted for us, so it came to pass: I was restored to my post, and the other was impaled.”

מ"ג

וַיָּבֹא יוֹסֵף הַכְּהֵנִי וַיְבִיאוּ לוֹ אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה אֲשֶׁר־בְּיָדָם הַכְּהֵנִי וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶי־לוֹ אַרְצָה: וַיִּשְׂאֵל לָהֶם
לְשָׁלוֹם וַיֹּאמֶר הַשָּׁלוֹם אֲבִיכֶם הִנֵּהנִי אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם הַעֲוֹנוֹנִי הִי:

וַיִּרְתַּץ פָּנָיו וַיֵּצֵא וַיִּתְאַפֵּק וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂיִמוּ לָחֶם: וַיִּשְׂיִמוּ לוֹ לִבְדּוֹ וְלָהֶם לִבְדָּם וְלַמְצָרִים הָאֲכָלִים
אֹתוֹ לִבְדָּם כִּי לֹא יוּכָלוּן הַמְצָרִים לֶאֱכֹל אֶת־הָעֲבָרִים לָחֶם כִּי־תוֹעֵבָה הוּא לַמְצָרִים:

When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts that they had brought with them into the house, bowing low before him to the ground. He greeted them, and he said, “How is your aged father of whom you spoke? Is he still in good health?”

They replied, “It is well with your servant our father; he is still in good health.” And they bowed and made obeisance.

Then he washed his face, reappeared, and—now in control of himself—gave the order, “Serve the meal.” **They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; for the Egyptians could not dine with the Hebrews, since that would be abhorrent to the Egyptians.**

מ"ד

וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי פֶרְעָה וּבְעֵינֵי כָל־עֲבָדָיו: וַיֹּאמֶר פֶּרְעָה אֶל־עֲבָדָיו הֲנִמְצָא כֹּהֵן אִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ:

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יֹסֵף אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלֹהִים אוֹתָהּ אֶת־כָּל־זֹאת אֵין־נִבּוֹן וְחָכָם כָּמוֹ
 אַתָּה תִּהְיֶה עַל־בֵּיתִי וְעַל־פִּיךָ יִשָּׁק כָּל־עַמִּי רַק הַכֹּסֵא אֶגְדֹּל מִמֶּךָ:
 וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יֹסֵף רְאֵה נָתַתִּי אֹתָךְ עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:
 וַיֹּסֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶת־טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ עַל־יַד יוֹסֵף וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֹתוֹ בְּגָדֵי־שֵׁשׁ וַיַּשֶּׂם רֶבֶד
 הַזָּהָב עַל־צוּאָרוֹ:
 וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמַרְכָּבַת הַמִּשְׁנָה אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיִּקְרָאוּ לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָ וְנַתַּן אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:
 וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל־יֹסֵף אֲנִי פַרְעֹה וְבַלְעֲדָיִךָ לֹא־יָרִים אִישׁ אֶת־יָדוֹ וְאֶת־רַגְלוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ
 מִצְרָיִם:
 וַיִּקְרָא פַרְעֹה שֵׁם־יֹסֵף צָפְנָת פַּעֲנִיחַ וַיִּתֵּן־לוֹ אֶת־אֲסֻנַּת בַּת־פּוֹטִי פַרְעֹה כַּתָּן אֹן לְאִשָּׁה
 וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

And Pharaoh said to his courtiers, “Could we find another like him—a man with the divine spirit?” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is none so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my court, and by your command shall all my people be directed; only with respect to the throne shall I be superior to you.” Pharaoh further said to Joseph, “See, I put you in charge of all the land of Egypt.” And removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph’s hand; and he had him dressed in robes of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.

He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they cried before him, “Abrek!” Thus he placed him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh; yet without you, no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” Pharaoh then gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him for a wife Asenath daughter of Poti-phera, priest of On. Thus Joseph emerged in charge of the land of Egypt.