

Tasting The Tanakh - On The Role Of Food Within Biblical Narratives

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Some Broad Themes:

I. Hospitality Or Cruelty

[Bereishit 18:1-3](#) vs. [Bereishit 19](#)

[Rashi](#)'s reading: From Hashem we learn *bikkur holim*. From Avraham we learn *bachnasat orbim*.

On Sedom: [Yechezkel](#), [Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer](#), [Bereishit Rabba](#), [Ramban](#)

Ezekiel 16:48-49

חַי־אֲנִי נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה אֱמַעֲשֶׂתְהֶן סֶדֶם אַחֻתְךָ הִיא וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂית אֶת וּבְנוֹתֶיךָ:
הִנֵּה-זֶה הָיָה עֵינֵן סֶדֶם אַחֻתְךָ גְּאוֹן שְׁבַעַת-לֶחֶם וְשִׁלּוֹת הַשֶּׁקֶט ט הִיָּה לָהּ וּלְבְנוֹתֶיהָ יַד-עֵנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן לֹא הִחֲזִיקָה:

As I live—declares the Lord GOD—your sister Sodom and her daughters did not do what you and your daughters did. Only this was the sin of your sister Sodom: arrogance! She and her daughters had plenty of bread and untroubled tranquillity; yet she did not support the poor and the needy.

II. Friends & Enemies

Other Nations: [Devarim 23:4](#) - Amon and Mo'av

The Witch Of Ein Dor and King Saul

<i>I Shmuel 28</i>	<i>Bereishit 18</i>
(22) "Now, therefore, I pray you, hearken you also unto the voice of your handmaid	(3) "If now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I pray you, from your servant.
and let me put a morsel of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength, when you go on your way."	(5) And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort your hearts; after that you shall pass on..."
(24) And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she made haste, and killed it...	(6) And Avraham hastened... (7) And Avraham ran to the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it to the young man; and he hurried to prepare it.
and she took flour, and kneaded it...	(6) "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes."
(25) Then they rose up, and went away that night.	(16) And the men rose up from there... (22) and they went toward Sedom.

Josephus, History Of The Jews, Book 6, Ch.14

Now it is only right to reflect upon the generosity of this woman. The king had forbidden her to use her art that allowed her to improve her circumstances, and yet she did not hold this against him

and did not refuse him as a stranger... but she had compassion upon him and comforted him and exhorted him to do what he was greatly averse to, and earnestly and with great humanity offered him the only calf she had even though she was a poor woman. Furthermore she expected nothing in return for her kindness, nor hunted after any future favour from him, for she knew that he was to die; whereas men are naturally eager to please those that bestow benefits upon them, or are very ready to serve those from whom they may receive some advantage. It would be well therefore to imitate the example of this woman, and to do kindnesses to all who are in need, and to think that nothing is better nor more fitting for mankind than such a general beneficence, that will also render God favourable and ready to bestow good things upon us.

III. To Vomit Or To Devour

The Land Of Israel: Vayikra 18:28

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־מִצְוֹתַי וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל הַתּוֹעֵבֹת הָאֵלֶּה הָאֲזָזְחָ וְהִגְרָ הִגְרָ בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כִּי אֶת־כָּל־הַתּוֹעֵבֹת הָאֵלֶּה עָשׂוּ אַנְשֵׁי־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵיכֶם וַתִּטְמָא הָאָרֶץ: וְלֹא־תִקְיֵא הָאָרֶץ אֶתְכֶם בְּטִמְאַכְם אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר קָאָה אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵיכֶם:

But you must keep My laws and My rules, and you must not do any of those abhorrent things, neither the citizen nor the stranger who resides among you; for all those abhorrent things were done by the people who were in the land before you, and the land became defiled. So let not the land spew you out for defiling it, as it spewed out the nation that came before you.

Other Lands: Vayikra 26:38

וְאַבְדֶתֶם בְּגוֹיִם וְאָכְלָה אֶתְכֶם אֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיכֶם:
 You shall perish among the nations; and the land of your enemies shall consume you.

The Mistake Of The Spies: Bamidbar 13:32

וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־עָלוּ עִמּוֹ אָמְרוּ לֹא נוֹכַל לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הָעָם כִּי־חֲזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ: וַיֹּצִיאוּ דְבַר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תָּרוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ בָּהּ לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲכָלָת יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ הוּא וְכָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־רָאִינוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ אַנְשֵׁי מְדוֹת:

But the men who had gone up with him said, “We cannot attack that people, for it is stronger than we.” Thus they spread calumnies among the Israelites about the land they had scouted, saying, “The country that we traversed and scouted is one that devours its settlers. All the people that we saw in it are men of great size;

IV. A Foil For Sexuality?

Except for the bread: [Yosef and Eishet Potifar](#)

Rashi:

כי אם הלחם. היא אשתו, אלא שדבּר בלשון נקיה

SAVE THE BREAD — this means his wife, but Scripture uses here a euphemism (Genesis Rabbah 86:6)

In what lies the connection?

V. In Denial...

- [Joseph's Brothers](#)
- [Achashverosh & Haman](#)
- [Nadav & Avihu?](#)

VI. Religiously Destructive vs. Religiously Redemptive

[Devarim 8:](#)

- V.3 Not by bread alone
- V.17 The strength of my hand
- V.10 You shall bless...