

Igbo Torah Thoughts

Parashah # 2: Noach (Noah)

B'reshit (Gen.) 6:9-11:32. Isa. 54:13-55:5

By: Rabbi Yehudah "Tochukwu" ben Shomeyr

The Curse of Slavery: a hot button topic that many may feel I do not understand nor have the right to speak on because my skin is "white."

Gen. 9:25-27 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Deut. 28:15, 36, 68 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: ... The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone... And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen...

Prior to delving into this topic we must establish a few things; namely, who Noah's sons were and what Noah's prophetic proclamations over them meant.

Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth; brothers, which whether born as triplets or separately, could have been born various shades in color which ended up producing the diversity of ethnic colors in the world today.

To begin with, from Adam to Noah, everyone was black in skin color. G-d created the first man and the first generations of man up till Noah as black people. Everyone had an abundance of melanin. Scientifically it had to be this way; you first have to have an abundance of melanin before you can have a lack of it. Why and how a "white" couple can birth a "black" child is because man at first was black and when other variances of melanin came to be in mankind it became a

recessive trait so to speak in fair skinned folks that could, ever so often, pop back up in a generation. Black is the presence of all color and white is the absence of color.

Hamm who gave birth to Canaan was black like his parents and is the progenitor of all the black ethnicities today.

Shem was dark but lighter than Hamm and their parent Noah and was the father of all the Semitic, Arabic and Latino peoples of the world.

Japheth was born fairest of all, "white" yet not albino white, and the Caucasian and most Asian peoples came from this son of Noah.

So the racist, white supremacist notion and bigoted propagandist doctrine of twisted religious fanatics among the Caucasoid peoples that Canaan was cursed with blackness is outrageously illogical and ridiculous, because as we have established from Adam to Noah, all peoples of the earth at that point and time were black. So Canaan could not have been cursed with blackness. There is no biblical narrative that says the curse that was upon Canaan was a visible one such as with Cain. And there too, Cain could not have been cursed with "blackness" of skin. No one is even certain what the visible curse of Cain was, we can only speculate. But if we were to go the skin color route it would make more sense that Cain was cursed with whiteness! Why? Because again, all mankind up to that point was black and the Torah states that white is the indication of a curse or a sickness, more specifically that of a skin malady called in the Hebrew Tza'aretz and in English we know this to be Leprosy, the sign of which was a whiteness of the skin (Lev. 13). White cannot show upon white, so the first Hebrews, the first Jews had to be black or dark in color for the blight of leprosy to be clearly seen and recognized on the skin.

So what of Noah's pronouncements upon his sons and what did it mean?

Gen. 9:25-27 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Ham was the eldest of Noah's sons and inherited the role of patriarch and leader, though due to his eventual rebellion and ungodliness fell to Shem and Japheth equally. Canaan, Ham's son's curse by Noah was, I believe, two fold. First, like the blessings of obedience in Deut. 27, in the best of times he was to bear the joyous burden of being a servant in regards to a leader, a ruler, which is defined as a servant of the people. The first rulers of the world were black, Nimrod and the Egyptians of Moses' time. It is interesting to me that early white archeologists have tried to conceal the powerful history of the black man from the world by stripping artifacts of the Hammetic features on artifacts, namely the nose, lips and occasionally the hair, which prominently shows the distinguishable Hammetic features. Secondly it meant, in the worst of times, like those who are disobedience in the vein of Deut. 28, Canaan's descendants was to be bondservants, slaves, forced to serve their brothers whom they once ruled.

Like Yeshua, Canaan, Hamm's son was privileged to be a "Servant of Servants" to his brothers and the world. His job was to equip and assist Shem and Japheth to fulfill their divine calling and mandate in the world. Without Hamm, Shem and Japheth could not achieve their full potential in HaShem. No man is an island. We all need one another to fulfill out calling in YHWH. G-d purposely made it this way so we would have to unite, depend on each other and work together for a common holy end. For example, I need the wisdom and direction of Hamm and the muscle of Japheth to fulfill my calling and vice versa; the sons of Noah need one another, we cannot truly and effectively live without one another!

Shem was proclaimed spiritual leader and advisor of the three brothers whom both Canaan and Japheth were to assist. Japheth was to be explorers and conquerors that assisted Canaan (Hamm) and Shem.

Can you imagine if healing, reconciliation and unification was once again achieved among the three brothers of Noah!? Talk about Tikkun Olam (Repairing the

World)! Talk about Revival! Talk about Heaven on Earth! Oh, how well the world would run if we all operated in our destined and divine callings!

Some believe it was Japheth's descendants who predominately furthered what we know today as Christianity and it was birthed from Judaism (Shem), this is the spiritual meaning of the reference of Japheth dwelling in Shem's tents his tallit (prayer shawl) if you will.

Deut. 28:68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen...

Egypt is both literal and spiritual. Spiritually it represents any place of bondage and slavery. This is reminiscent of the African Slave Trade. But you may ask, are the African slaves Hebrew? Yes, most of them were.

Specifically Gad whose mother was Leah's handmaid Zilpah is rumored to have been a black woman. Both handmaids (Zilpah and Bilhah) are speculated to have been Hammetic and so a portion of the 12 tribes were black men. Also, we must remember that Moses married a black woman and so thus a portion of the priestly tribe Levi became black. Song of Solomon is written about a black woman, so even parts of Judah are black.

25% of all African Americans and 60% of Jamaicans, and an unknown percentage of Haitians are descendants of the Igbo tribe of Nigeria, which were the first slaves the white men took from Africa and now has been discovered is a portion of the lost tribe of Gad. It was prophesied that some tribes would be scattered beyond Egypt and even beyond Ethiopia (Isa. 11:11-12, Zeph. 3:10, Psa. 68:31). So Deut. 28:68 applies to a portion of those whose ancestors suffered in the slave trade.

G-d has always used the nations to punish His people when they disobeyed Him

by disregarding the Instructions of Torah and thus the nations were given permission by G-d to scourge His people. We read how the two Kingdoms, Judah and Israel suffered at the hands of other nations when they were in rebellion against G-d's Torah. How they were carted off into Babylonian and Assyrian Captivity respectively. However, when the divinely ordained enemy scourge went go overboard on Judah and Israel, they in turn end up being punished by G-d directly for being too harsh to His chosen people. But it was the punishment they received by the nations which caused them to once again seek G-d and His ways and return to Him. So in light of the subject at hand, I am by no means excusing the blight of the slave trade in American history, but I must point out that the Rabbi's and Sages believe that even in curses there is a silver lining designed to bring the disobedient back to G-d. It was within this curse of slavery which was predicted in Torah and by the prophets due to his peoples disobedience, that the lost tribes were introduced to Messiah through the means of the evangelization of Christianity and today the equilibrium is beginning to find its balance as these same peoples and lost tribes are finally coming full circle in returning to Torah obedience as they discover their true identity as Jews and Hebrews, and thus in this way Israel is being saved (Rom. 11:26).

A lot of generational animosity, anger and hate is kept and felt by some of those whose ancestors were slaves and in some cases has produced black supremacy movements which are just as evil and wicked as the white supremacy movements. So one must be aware of and examine the Black Israelite and or Black Hebrew movement when they find and run across them because many times it tends to be the black version of white supremacist groups, movements and organizations. The majority of what they say is half-truths as well as historically and scholarly manipulated propaganda. They give real, genuine and proven black Jews and Hebrews of the world, such as the Ethiopian Lemba tribe, who are proven to be of the Israeli tribe of Levi and Igbo, which comes from the Israeli tribe of Gad through Gad's son Eri, a bad name and leaving a bad taste in the mouth of believers of all ethnicities.

To perpetuate and proclaim that Jews/Hebrews are ONLY black or ONLY white is extreme, foolish and a harmful, prejudiced, unbalanced lie. Because of the captivities and migration of all the 12 tribes, the sons of Israel has mingled and mixed with virtually every ethnic group in the world and in this way bringing

unification, reconciliation and a holy oneness to the world and the peoples of the world, Noah's three sons. Nimrod had a similar yet evil, perverted notion of this in the whole incident at Babel.

Even though through disobedience to Torah the people brought slavery upon themselves, there is no excuse for slavery of such magnitude as was seen in the American Slave Trade. However, we must recognize that on the other side of that dark veil of shameful history, after healing, reconciliation and restoration is made, a gateway of light, freedom and prosperity for the black Hebrews was made. Holding on to the anger and resentment of the past which lay buried in the dust, in this case, clouds the mind, darkens the heart and is useless seeing as due to the disobedience of Torah the people brought slavery upon themselves anyhow, despite the slave traders taking it to an unnecessary degree in which judgment is in store for that.

I, as a white Jew could choose to hold on to unforgiveness, hate and animosity toward the Gentiles, because of the pogroms; especially the Germans, at whose hand six million of my people died a cruel death, slaughtered like animals. Through the holocaust the Jews became slaves. But I choose to forgive, but never forget lest history repeats itself. As the slogan goes, post holocaust, "Never Again." I had a young blonde haired blue eyed German man come up to me crying and asking for forgiveness for himself and his people because of the holocaust and I told him, no forgiveness is necessary. He wasn't born yet, he personally had no hand in the holocaust. I nonetheless praised him for his heart and the gesture of healing and reconciliation, I hugged him and told him that I loved him and his people and that I hold no unforgiveness, malice or ill intent in my heart. For I realize we Jews partially brought the holocaust upon ourselves due to our disobedience to Torah, for the majority of Jews in the holocaust were far from being religiously observant. They were in the death camps not because of the practice of their religion, but simply because they were children of Abraham and Judah, just because they ethnically were Jews. And it was due to the holocaust and many righteous gentiles of the holocaust who were Christian introduced us to Messiah and as a result the Natsari movement, the Jewish movement of the first century Torah Obedient believers in Messiah Yeshua was resurrected. Again, things come full circle as this too is a way that all Israel is being saved in

fulfillment to the prophecies; the tribes of Israel and the Tribe of Judah coming to walk in Messiah's footsteps by keeping Torah.

BIBLICAL SLAVERY

What does all this say about the acceptance and approval of slavery in the Torah? The issue of Scriptural Slavery has been taken out of contest because most people look at it in light of the cruel African, Asian, and Native American slave trades. Slavery in Torah terminology between two Hebrews is best understood in regards to an indentured servant or a hired hand.

Many times a Hebrew would find themselves in debt with the threatening prospect of being sold into slavery as a result. So the Torah says it's best to be indebted to a Jew as opposed to a foreigner because the Torah gives guidelines on the treatment of slaves and it reads like an Employer / Employee hand book. It even makes room for a type of severance pay. Hebrew slaves are treated so well that it can turn into a full time position.

Deut. 15:12-18 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

Rav Sha'ul (Paul) knew this concept real well and was proud to call himself a slave, servant, and or bond servant to G-d, depending on what translation you use (Rom. 1:1, Titus 1:1).

Even non-Hebrew slaves serving a Hebrew had it good. Eleazar, Avraham's servant would have gotten everything if Ishmael and Isaac didn't come along. Abraham trusted him to find a wife for his son Isaac (Gen. 15:2).

But the Torah also says:

Deut. 23:15 (16) Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee:

16 (17) He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

We are always to remember where we came from as a people, that we to were once slaves in Egypt.

Rav Sha'ul (Paul) found himself in a tough rabbinical position. In his letter to Philemon we see that Rav Sha'ul is in prison with a runaway slave named Onesimus. Rav Sha'ul knowing the Torah full well probably had these very verses in mind when dealing with this dilemma. For the verses above tells us that a Jew must not return a runaway slave to his former master. But on the other hand apparently at some point during his stay with the Rav, Onesimus converted to Natsari Judaism (1:14) and was thus no longer just a Gentile slave, but a Hebrew brother in the Messiah. So Rav Sha'ul convinces Onesimus upon his release to return with this letter to Philemon; the letter implores Philemon to receive Onesimus back as a brother (1:16). Rav Sha'ul even vouches for Philemon that he himself would be held responsible if Philemon stole anything or damaged him in any way (1:18).

I imagine Rav Sha'ul was thinking of the good relationship that Avraham and Eleazar had as a model for Philemon and his Master to follow, which was similar to a father and son relationship rather than a slave / master or even employer/employee relationship.

In our dealings with each other, let us keep in mind that whatever situation we may find ourselves in the body, that we are all mishpocha (family) and need to treat one another as such.

Folks, coming full circle here, it is time to stop bearing the grudge of history, pointing the finger and laying the blame just because we are each a different color or come from a different brother. The bottom line is we all have the same Father. It is time we learned from our mistakes and bury the hatchet, forgive, love one another and unite in such a way as Adonai intended. Maybe it is not unfulfilled prophecy keeping Moshiach from coming back, but perhaps it's our refusal to reconcile with one another and heal each other's wounds. If Ishmael and Isaac could reconcile (Gen. 25:9), why can't Shem, Hamm and Japheth? Moshiach will not return for a Bride at war with herself. Let us seek out our brethren and being echad (one), let us be a Bride that Moshiach cannot wait to return for.

Isa. 54:3-10

"For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee."

Seeing as Igbos are Hebrews and seeing as the slavery of the past and the current Diaspora of the Igbos is due to disobedience to Torah and the forsaking of Omenana (Deut. 28, Jer. 16:16); upon repentance comes revival and on the heels of revival comes the future restoration Isaiah speaks of here.

The Igbos are predominantly from Gad, through Gad's sons, Eri, Areli and Arodi (Gen. 46:16). Though Judah, Levi, Zebulon and others are present, they have been absorbed into the numerically dominate tribe of Gad and thus the prophecy concerning Gad is appropriate here when speaking of the future restoration of Ndi Igbo (Gad).

"Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last... And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel." – Gen. 49:19, Deut. 33:20-21

Gad/Ndi Igbo will be blessed and thus enlarged after shaking off the shackles of the Western World. Despite the prejudice we see in Nigeria as well as in the Diaspora, the Igbos have been blessed in legal, medical, business, entertainment and technological fields and are thus beginning to prosper. What will solidify this prophesied coming restoration is when the Igbo forsake the hedonistic ways of the West, the foreign religious ways of the white man and love one another and thus, in unity, return to Torah via Omenana, the way Igbos fulfill Torah.

SHABBAT SHALOM! IGBO KWENU!

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