

## מקורות לשמות א, ח-יד

### 1. רמב"ן שמות פרק א, י

הבה נתחכמה לו - לא ראה פרעה וחכמי יועציו להכותם בחרב, כי תהיה בגידה גדולה להכות חנם העם אשר באו בארץ במצות המלך הראשון. וגם עם הארץ לא יתנו רשות למלך לעשות חמס כזה, כי עמהם הוא מתייעץ, ואף כי בני ישראל עם רב ועצום ויעשו עמהם מלחמה גדולה. אבל אמר שיעשו דרך חכמה שלא ירגישו ישראל כי באיבה יעשו בהם, ולכך הטיל בהם מס, כי דרך הגרים בארץ להעלות מס למלך כמו שבא בשלמה (מ"א ט כא). ואחרי כן צוה בסתר למילדות להרוג הזכרים על האבנים, ואפילו היולדות עצמן לא ידעו בהם:

ואחרי כן צוה לכל עמו כל הבן הילוד היאורה תשליכוהו אתם. והענין שלא רצה לצוות לשרי הטבחים אשר לו להרגם בחרב המלך או שישליכו הם אותם ליאור, אבל אמר לעם כאשר ימצא כל אחד ילד יהודי ישליך אותו ביאור, ואם יצעק אבי הילד אל המלך או אל שר העיר יאמרו שיביא עדים ויעשה בו נקמה. וכאשר הותרה רצועת המלך היו המצרים מחפשים הבתים ונכנסים שם בלילות ומתנכרין ומוציאים הילדים משם, כי על כן נאמר ולא יכלה עוד הצפינו (להלן ב ג):

### 2. How Slobodan Milosevic turned neighbor against neighbor

Milosevic stirred up existing ethnic rivalries and, through propaganda, introduced new ones. Soon Croatia and Serbia were at war, riven by nationalist and ethnic discontent. Milosevic then imported the war to Bosnia, multiethnic since the early Middle Ages. He fanned the flames of nationalist hatred until Bosnia burst into ethnic conflagration. Neighbor would turn on neighbor, Serb against Muslim, Serb against Croat. The result was a kind of collective madness that spawned the worst atrocities and war crimes Europe had seen since World War II: mass executions, torture, the expulsion of millions of civilians from their homes, concentration camps.

Elizabeth Neuffer, *The Key to My Neighbors House: Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda*, p. 9.

### 3. Neighbor fighting neighbor in the 1992 Bosnian war

A farmer named Adem sat in the corner, hunched over, fact towards the ground. His cousin, the one who lured me over, coaxed Adem to life, barely. Adem extended one of his hands, a big, muscle-bound paw of a man of the earth. I shook the hand, and it was limp. It had gone limp, like his spirit, on the night when thirty-five men from his village were rounded up by Serbs from a neighboring village and had their throats slit. He told the story in a whispered mumble. They were killed by Serbs who had been their friends, people who had helped harvest their fields the previous autumn, people with whom they shared adolescent adventures and secrets.

...

One of the Mysteries of Bosnia's war is why so many good people stood by as evil deeds were committed in their name....It is a universal mystery. Why, when the would-be dictators of the world start barking their songs of hate, do so many people sing along rather than stand up and say, simply, "No"? It's a cliché to point to the "good Germans" who followed Hitler into his madness because their duty was not to question but to obey. What about the Americans who buckled under to McCarthyism? Or, what about the joggers in Central Park who fearfully run past someone being mugged?

Peter Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War* (New York: Vintage, 1997), pp. 6 and 19.

might you trust? What policies might you support? Oppose? Be sure to include your feelings as well as your stand on the issues. Are you scared? Uncertain? Confident? Record your comments in your journal.

## READING 4

### *Targeting the Jews*

To bring about his revolution, Hitler had to isolate and then eliminate his opponents. Once the Communists were outside the protection of the law, he turned his attention to the Jews. He ordered Nazi leaders to “bring up the Jewish question again and again and again, unceasingly. Every emotional aversion, however slight, must be exploited ruthlessly. As a basic rule among the education professions the Jewish questions should be discussed from the standpoints of the findings of the science of race, of higher ethics, etc. While among members of the labouring classes one must seize on the purely emotional; the emotional aversion to Jews is to be heightened by all possible means.”

As part of its campaign, the government announced a one-day boycott of Jewish businesses. On Saturday, April 1, Germans were to refuse to shop or do business at any company owned by Jews. Julius Streicher, the man in charge of the boycott and the publisher of the antisemitic *Der Stuermer*, created the lie that would be repeated constantly, just as Hitler instructed.

To me the whole thing was inconceivable. It would not sink in that something like that could even be possible in the twentieth century, for such things had happened, at most, in the Middle Ages. And yet it was the bitter truth that outside, in front of the door, there stood two boys in brown shirts, Hitler's executives.

The same Jew who plunged the German people into the blood-letting of the World War, and who committed on it the crime of the November Revolution (Weimar) is now engaged in stabbing Germany, recovering from its shame and misery, in the back... The Jew is again engaged in poisoning public opinion. World Jewry is engaged again in slandering the German people... At 10 A.M. Sat., 1 April, the defensive action of the German people against the Jewish world criminal will begin. A defensive fight begins, such as never has been dared before throughout the centuries.<sup>15</sup>

ונוסף גם הוא  
על שונאינו  
ונלחם בנו

Although the boycott was not as successful as the Nazis had hoped, it offered many Jews a frightening glimpse into the future. Edwin Landau described the boycott in his hometown in West Prussia.

In the morning hours the Nazi guards began to place themselves in front of the Jewish shops and factories, and every shopper was warned not to buy from the Jews. In front of our business, also, two young Nazis posted themselves and prevented customers from entering. To me the whole thing was inconceivable. It would not sink in that something like that could even be possible in the twentieth century, for

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ויקם מלך חדש  
על מצרים אשר

And for this nation we young Jews had once stood in the trenches in cold and rain, and spilled our blood to protect the land from the enemy. Was there no comrade any more from those days who was sickened by these goings-on? One saw them pass by on the street, among them quite a few for whom one had done a good turn. They had a smile on their face that betrayed their malicious pleasure...

לא ידע את יוסף

I took my war decorations, put them on, went into the street, and visited Jewish shops, where at first I was also stopped. But I was seething inside, and most of all I would have liked to shout my hatred into the faces of these barbarians. Hatred, hatred – when had it become part of me? – It was only a few hours ago that a change had occurred within me. This land and this people that until now I had loved and treasured had suddenly become my enemy. So I was not a German anymore, or I was no longer supposed to be one. That, of course, cannot be settled in a few hours. But one thing I felt immediately: I was ashamed that I had once belonged to this people. I was ashamed about the trust that I had given to so many who now revealed themselves as my enemies. Suddenly the street, too, seemed alien to me; indeed, the whole town had become alien to me. Words do not exist to describe the feelings that I experienced in those hours. Having arrived at home, I approached the one guard whom I knew and who also knew me, and I said to him: “When you were still in your diapers I was already fighting out there for this country.” He answered: “You should not reproach me for my youth, sir... I’ve been ordered to stand here.” I looked at his young face and thought, he’s right. Poor, misguided young people!<sup>16</sup>

## CONNECTIONS

What lies does Streicher tell in his speech? To what emotions did his speech appeal? Why did he use the word *defensive* to describe the action he would like Germans to take?

The night before the boycott, Joseph Goebbels, the newly appointed Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, gave a speech in which he referred to the Jews of Germany as “guests.” He told his audience, “If they believe they can misuse our hospitality they are sadly mistaken.” What is Goebbels implying about German citizens of Jewish descent? About their right to live in Germany?

ויאמר אל עמו  
הנה עם  
בני ישראל

Write a working definition of the word *boycott*. Research its use in American history. For example, how did the colonists use boycotts to express their disapproval of British taxes in the 1770s? How did civil rights

## READING 15

### *"Hell Has No Bottom"*

Charlotte Delbo, a Catholic woman who fought in the French resistance before she was shipped to Auschwitz, recalled:

The projectors light the barbed wire strung between high white poles. Encircled by light, the camp lies in darkness and in this black abyss nothing can be distinguished  
nothing except darker shapes swaying  
ghostlike upon the ice.  
The roll-call siren has emptied the barracks. By swaying clusters, the women have all stumbled out, clinging to each other so as not to fall.  
And when one does fall, the whole cluster reels and falls and gets back up, falls again and rises, and in spite of it all moves on.  
Without a word.  
There is only the screaming of the furies who want the barracks to empty faster, want the reeling shades to move faster from the barracks to the space where the roll is called.  
In the darkness, for the beams of the projectors do not reach the spaces between the barracks. They light only the gate and the barbed wire enclosure so that the sentinels up in the watchtowers may spot those trying to escape and shoot  
as if one could escape  
as if one could cut through the fence of high-tension live barbed wire  
as if...<sup>42</sup>

וכאשא יענו אותו כן

Alexander Donat, a prisoner at Majdanek, said of daily routines:

ירבה וכן יפרץ ויקצו

מפני בני ישראל

Beating and being beaten was taken for granted at Majdanek, and was an integral part of the system. Everyone could beat an inmate and the more experienced inmates never questioned why. They knew that they were beaten merely because they happened to run into someone who wanted to beat them. In most cases, the beating did not even involve personal anger or hatred; the authorities hated their victims as a group because when you wrong people for no reason, sooner or later you must come to hate them. It is difficult for man to endure the idea he is a beast and maltreats another human being, without cause; therefore, he eventually discovers justification for his behavior and imputes the fault to his victim. Thus, beating was part of the system. Thus, also, the victim was expected to take his licks standing rigidly at attention. Attempts to avoid blows, to cover one's face or head, were

## READING 9

### *Changes at School*

ויצו פרעה לכל עמו לאמר כל הבן הילוד  
היאורה תשליכוהו וכל הבת תחיון

**E**llen Switzer, a student in Nazi Germany, later recalled how a classmate named Ruth responded to attempts at isolating the Jews.

Her most appealing qualities were her total sincerity and her willingness to share whatever she had with a classmate in need. If the school was cold... Ruth would always lend you her sweater; she insisted that the cold air made her feel more alive. If you forgot your lunch, Ruth shared hers; she was not very hungry that day. Out of the same generosity that prompted her to share her clothing and her food, she also shared her ideas. Ruth was a dedicated Nazi.

She always had a large number of pamphlets, booklets, newsletters and other materials in her book bag, along with her school supplies. If one wanted to discuss clothes or one's problem with a teacher or a parent with Ruth, she was always willing to do so. But somehow, the discussion tended to turn political... "Here, take this booklet, it will explain what I'm talking about," she would often say, pressing in our hands yet another piece of literature, which often seemed surprisingly relevant to the problem we have been discussing...

Some of us, especially those of us who were called "non-Aryan" (and therefore, thoroughly evil) in Ruth's booklets, often asked her how she could possibly have friends who were Jews or who had a Jewish background, when everything she read and distributed seemed to breathe hate against us and our ancestors. "Of course, they don't mean you," she would explain earnestly. "You are a good German. It's those other Jews, pacifists, socialists and liberals who betrayed Germany that Hitler wants to remove from influence..."

When Hitler actually came to power and the word went out that students of Jewish background were to be isolated, that "Aryan" Germans were no longer to associate with "non-Aryans" (i.e., those who were either Jewish or who had one Jewish ancestor, even though they themselves were Christians), Ruth actually came around and apologized to those of us to whom she was no longer able to talk. "The whole thing may be a misunderstanding," she explained, "Maybe it will all be straightened out later. But meanwhile, Hitler must know what he is doing, and I'll follow orders," Not only did she no longer speak to the suddenly ostracized group of classmates, she carefully noted down anybody who did, and reported them.<sup>26</sup>