



Parshas Vayera, One for All, All for One 2023

The Parsha Perspective is in honor of our land, Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers as they eradicate our enemies. May G-d save all the hostages in Gaza from harm and return them immediately. May G-d comfort all those who lost family or friends in the horrific attack. May G-d grant a speedy recovery to all those injured in the attack.

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in honor of the Yahrzeit of HaRav Ya'akov Tzvi Ben David Sacks, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory. He was the chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom from 1991 to 2013. An author of 25 books, his impact and influence was worldwide. His profound wisdom propelled him on the world stage, where he guided people with empathy and compassion. He returned his holy soul on the 20th of Cheshvan in 2020, but his teachings continue to inspire people across the globe. May his impact continue growing and his memory be a blessing for all.

Our Parsha begins with G-d appearing to Avraham Avinu just after having a circumcision. To ease his pain, G-d made the sun exceptionally hot so there would be no travelers for Avraham to host in his tent. But after seeing how much it bothered Avraham that he had no one to help, G-d sent three angels in the form of men to visit him.

Avraham brought these three travelers to his tent to wash their feet and cool down in the shade. He quickly asked his wife Sarah to make three Matzos for the guests as it was the holiday of Pesach. Avraham then sent his son Ishmael to slaughter three small calves for his guests to eat. Although he just had a circumcision, Avraham attended and cared for each traveler - angel.

One of the angel's jobs was to inform Avraham and Sarah that they would have a son in precisely one year. Listening from the tent, Sarah began to laugh, thinking it was physically impossible for her to have a child.

But G-d was not impressed with Sarah; He turned to Avraham and asked why Sarah laughed? Therefore, when the baby was born a year later, he was named Yitzchak, which stems from the Hebrew word for laughter.

The other two angels left Avraham's tent and proceeded with their mission. One angel was tasked with destroying Sedom and Amorah for their depravity and immortality. While the other angel was to save Lot and his family and bring them to a safe location.

However, a question comes to mind: Avraham Avinu encounters three angels during his conversation with G-d, each with a specific job. According to many opinions, they were some of the highest ministering angels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. The first angel was to tell Avraham the good news that his wife, Sarah, would finally have a child after many years. The second angel was to destroy and overturn Sedom and Amorah. The last angel was to heal Avraham from the pain of the Bris he gave himself.

Rashi writes that three angels were necessary because an angel can only do one job before returning to G-d. Yet we see that one angel, Michael, told Avraham the good news and then went to save Lot in Sedom. Why did the angel, Michael, have two missions if an angel is only capable of doing one task at a time?!

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory, delves into this question in his book *Covenant and Conversation*. He writes that although it may seem like separate missions, healing Avraham Avinu and saving Lot, at their core, they are one.

The Talmud in Baba Metzia (86a) details the interaction that Avraham Avinu had with the three angels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Initially, the angels were standing "**on top**" of Avraham.

The Pasuk writes: (18:2), "וַיִּשָׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיִּרָא וַיָּרֵץ לְקָרְאָתָם - *And he looked up and there were three men standing upon him, he saw and he ran to greet them.*" If the angels were near him, why did Avraham have to run after them?

The Talmud answers that, at first, the angels were right near his tent, but when they saw that Avraham was in pain, they began to backtrack. So, while in pain,

Avraham ran after them to fulfill his favorite Mitzvah, Hachnasas Orchim - hosting guests.

Rabbi Sacks explains the reason the angel Michael could do two seemingly separate tasks is because they were essentially one mission. In the merit of Avraham's connection to G-d and love of humanity, Lot, his nephew and his family were saved. As Michael was to tell Avraham that he would finally have a son who would continue his legacy, his other family merited salvation.

This profound lesson is ever more relevant as the war against our enemies continues in the land we call home, Eretz Yisroel. So many of our brothers and sisters have sacrificed their lives for the sake of G-d's holy name. Thousands of our soldiers are on the front lines, putting their lives in danger for the sake of each one of us. In the merit of their bravery, courage and persistence to keep the Jewish story alive, may we all merit the Ultimate Redemption!

Although, in the past few months, our nation's unity has been put to the test, fortunately, the division was shallow at best. No matter where we are, the Jewish nation is inherently connected at its core. The unity and oneness displayed today is the innate and natural experience of the Jewish people.

Throughout history, we have suffered when we have differentiated and separated ourselves from our brothers and sisters. **But we have also experienced the greatest salvations and redemptions when we remembered that we are truly one.**

בימים ההם בזמן הזה

"In Those Days and In These Times!"

Have a meaningful Shabbos

Rabbi Sholom Yemini