



Parshas Vayera 2022, father to fatherhood

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Leah Mintche Bas Gittel, and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of my grandfather, Yaakov Yosef ben Aryeh Leib, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in honor of the Yahrzeit of HaRav Ya'akov Tzvi Ben Dovid 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 to grow and May 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 did Sarah laugh? 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: When the two angels left Avraham's tent, the Torah details G-d's thoughts and the conversation that resulted from it. The Pasuk writes (18:17) הֲמַכְסֶּה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה - "*Shall I hide from Avraham what I about to do (to Sedom and Amorah).*" So G-d told Avraham that He was about to destroy Sedom and Amorah. Naturally, Avraham argued with G-d and pleaded with Him to save human life. But why did G-d need to tell Avraham what He was to do?

Furthermore, why did Avraham argue and negotiate with G-d to save the evil and wicked people of Sedom and Amorah?!

Rashi, Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading commentator on the Torah, gives a simple explanation. He answers that G-d promised Avraham that his children and descendants would inherit the land of Israel. Since Sedom and Amorah were part of Israel, G-d wanted to let Avraham know what he was about to do to his land.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan commentator and Kabbalist, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that Avraham just had a name change, Avram to Avraham, because he was to be the father of many nations. Since he was given that designation, G-d wanted to let Avraham know what He would do to his people in Sedom and Amorah.

As any parent would have done, Avraham argued with G-d and fought for their lives despite them being sinful and corrupt. Ever since Avraham became the father of many nations rather than just a family, he struggled with any loss of life and felt compelled to say something.

Conversely, when Noach was told about the flood and the destruction of humanity, he did not pray or negotiate for their survival. While being a devoted follower of G-d when no one else was, he would not be the father of many nations. Whether he lacked the ability or belief that he could save the world, he did not ask G-d to spare their lives. Because of this crucial difference, Avraham is the father of many peoples and the first forefather of the Jewish nation.

There are many lessons to learn from Avraham Avinu, but the most important ones are his belief and trust in G-d and his love for humanity. Avraham Avinu understood that each human being is a child of G-d and inherently valuable. This implies that every individual is necessary and essential to implement G-d's desire in this world. He passed down this understanding and awareness to every Jew so we could fulfill our purpose and reveal the ultimate redemption.

In our daily life, we must realize that expecting others to think and act as we do will lead to constant frustration. Every person is going through their own journey with trials and tribulations shaping their views and opinions. This singularity makes each of us precious, unique, and irreplaceable.

Most importantly, this change of mentality will stop the cycle of disappointment in others when failing to live up to your expectations. Rekindle your faith in every person's potential to accomplish far beyond your imagination.

"Faith is the knowledge that we are here for a reason and that in our journey through life G-d is with us, lifting us when we fall, forgiving us when we fail, believing in us more than we believe in ourselves."

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*