

## INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

*Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.*

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### והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו

**"And behold three men stood before him..." (18:2)**

In the weekly portion of *Vayeira*, we learn of the hospitality practiced by *Avraham* and subsequently by *Lot*. Concerning *Avraham*, the text reads: "And when he saw them, he ran to meet them." The same was said of *Lot* when he met the angels (19:1), "And *Lot* saw them and rose up to meet them." Thus, we may ask, wherein lies the difference between *Avraham's* hospitality and *Lot's*?

With regard to *Avraham* the verse states, "And behold, three men stood beside him." The inference is that *Avraham* perceived his visitors as ordinary men; in fact, as *Rashi* explains, he considered them to be idolatrous Arabs. And yet, "when he saw them, he ran to meet them." By contrast, regarding *Lot* it says, "And the two angels came to *Lot* at evening." Should *Lot* be commended for offering hospitality to angels? After all, who would not want to welcome angels into his home!?

(Beis HaLevi)

### והנה שלשה

**"And behold three..." (18:2)**

The numerical value of *והנה שלשה*, and *behold, three*, equals the numerical value of *אלו* מיכאל גבריאל ורפאל, *these were Michael, Gavriel, and Raphael*. According to the *Midrash Rabba*, these were the very three angels who visited *Avraham*.

(Chomas Anoch)

### כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך ה'

**"(Avraham) will instruct his children and his household after him and they will observe the way of Hashem..." (18:19)**

Although the phrase "*after him*" seems superfluous, careful analysis shows that it is perfectly in context: the ultimate test of a Torah-true upbringing is whether one's children continue along the Torah path in their adult lives and imbue their children with the same values they received from their parents. If they do, it's a sure sign that Jewish tradition was passed on to them lovingly rather than coercively.

In our verse, therefore, G-d pays *Avraham* the ultimate compliment: his teaching style guarantees that his progeny will follow in his footsteps not only while he is still alive – out of respect for him – but “*after him*” – long after his is gone, because they truly understand and accept his traditions.

*Chassidic* commentators link the word “*yetzaveh*” – translated as instruct with the word “*tzavta*” – meaning a close-knit group. Our verse would then mean not only that *Avraham* merely instructs his family but that he lovingly unites them with the unifying force of Torah.

(*Haderash V'haiyun*)

**צחק עשה לי אלקים כל השמע יצחק לי**

**“G-d has made joy for me, whoever hears will rejoice with me...” (21:6)**

G-d bestowed upon *Sarah* the most beautiful and precious gift: her own child. But she felt that she could only rejoice fully if others rejoiced with her. In a similar vein, whenever the Torah speaks of *simcha*, rejoicing, it always mentions that one has to share one’s blessings with another. We are thus taught (*Devarim* 12:18), *you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant and the Levite who is in your cities – and you shall rejoice before G-d.*

(*Chumash Mesoras HaRav*)

**כי ברך אברכך והרבה ארבה את זרעך ככוכבי השמים**

**“I will greatly bless you and will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens...” (22:17)**

The blessings that Hashem bestowed on *Avraham* after *Akeidat Yitzchak* were unconditional. Hashem did not say, “If you follow My statutes,” or “If you heed My voice,” or “If you are willing and obedient...” Such prefaces communicate, “If so, yes. But if not, then no.”

This is what is meant toward the end of the *Tachanun* prayer that we say during *Shacharit* on Mondays and Thursdays, “*Hear our voice and be gracious...remember what You swore our forefathers: ‘I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens’ – remember that You swore without attaching even one condition.*” In other words, although we may be undeserving, You remain obligated to fulfill that oath You took long ago.

(*Chafetz Chaim on the Torah*)

**SHABBAT SHALOM!**

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