

Parsha in Poetry Vayeira

with **Nissi Merenstein**

Avraham loved the Creator
He was on a mission to spread G-d's name from his neighbor to the equator.
In his tent, he welcomed guests through four doors
To attract guests from every direction, as far as the shores
At Mamre, on the third day after his circumcision, his pain was most severe,
Avraham sat by his door in a heat wave, and felt G-d's presence near.
He was waiting for guests to appear;
When he saw three men, he gave a cheer.
He asked G-d to please wait
Let me bring them in for water and put bread on their plate
He ran to Sarah's tent to prepare a large feast
His joy in welcoming guests had not decreased.
Avraham didn't realize that these guests were angels in disguise.
They said: at this time next year, you're in for a surprise -
You will have a child. Sarah laughed inwardly, her eyes wide.
"How is that possible? We are already old?" she thought inside.
G-d asked, "Is anything too wondrous for Me to unfold?"
Then to Avraham He foretold,
"In a year she will have a son."

On to the next errand - the angels weren't done.
They were to destroy Sodom and its neighboring cities
Avraham doesn't like this plan, because the people he pities.
He began to pray immediately,
"Could there be some righteous people there?" he asked pleadingly.
G-d replied, "Even for ten righteous, I will spare the city."
Avraham's prayers showed his deep concern and pity.

At night, two angels made their way to Sodom
Lot was searching for guests - when he saw them, his eyes shone.
He convinced them to stay at his home.
To avoid being seen, they took a special route
He provided them dinner and the best hospitality throughout.
They were about to go to bed when they heard a shout



The entire city surrounded his house, pounding on the door,
"Give us your guests!" they did roar
"No, no, please don't harm them!" Lot said,
"Here, take my two daughters instead."
The crowd grew more furious; their anger spread.
The angels stepped in instead
And struck the mob with blindness, showing who they were.
"Come now, the city's destruction is near,
Gather your family and flee; you must not remain here!"
Lot spoke to his sons-in-law, explaining the situation
They just laughed at this information, showing no interest in participation
There was no more time for an explanation!
The angels led Lot, his wife, and two daughters away from that location.
They were warned not to look back as they set out to flee
But Lot's wife didn't listen, and turned 'round to see
The destruction behind her. Because she looked back,
The commentaries teach that it was her own fault
That she was turned into a pillar of salt.

Though safe in Tzoar, Lot was afraid to stay
So he and his daughters went to a cave farther away.
His daughters thought that no one else was alive
That they had been the only ones to survive
They said, "Mankind we need to revive."
Plenty of drinks for the father, they did not deprive.
From this forbidden relationship, Ammon and Moav would derive.

In the meantime,
Avraham continued his mission to spread G-d's name.
He was looking for a large population
Near which he and his family could station.
He relocated to the city of Gerar.
King Avimelech saw Sarah, whom he desired
"Who is she?" he inquired
Avraham, afraid of being killed, told Sarah in a whisper,
"Say you're my sister."
G-d sent a plague to Avimelech, instructing that Sarah must be returned
He did so, along with money and herds, to show that the message he discerned.



He also gave his daughter as a maid. So Avraham prayed
That G-d should heal them and come to their aid
He forgave them and Avimelech was healed,
And Sarah gave birth - G-d's miracle revealed.

Avraham was 100 years old when his son was born on this earth
Keeping his promise, Avraham had him circumcised on the 8th day after birth
Yishmael was behaving badly, so Sarah decided to intervene -
To have him around pure Yitzchok, Sarah was not keen.
G-d said, "Whatever Sarah says, listen - don't give any opposition."
So Avraham sent out Hagar and Yishmael with a flask of water for hydration,
When they finished the ration they cried out to G-d in petition -
To the boy's prayers G-d listened
And said, "From him a big nation will come to fruition."

Avimelech heard about all the miracles that had occurred,
So he requested a peace treaty, and Avraham concurred.
Avraham swore to deal fairly with his family for three generations.

Now back to Avraham's final test, and its reverberations.
Yitzchok was 37 when G-d told Avraham to bring his son for an offering
Yitzchok asked, "Father, where is the lamb we are bringing?"
When he found out that he was going to be the sacrifice
He accepted with devotion, his faith beyond price.
As Avraham held out the knife,
An angel called, "Stop! Do not stretch out your hand!"
"Now I know that you fear G-d," came the command.
Avraham offered the nearby ram in Yitzchok's place.
G-d said to Avraham, "Because of what you've done -
You did not withhold your beloved son -
Your descendants will be as numerous as the sand
And the stars that fill the sky.
They will possess their enemies' gates, far and nigh.
Through your descendants, blessing will reach the world's shores -
A promise of blessing that forever endures."

