

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT VAYERA

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Arguing with God



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Parashat Vayera raises several themes that have become central topics of conversation throughout Jewish history, and represent many of our core values, such as: hospitality, marriage, tests of faith and loyalty to God. We are taken on a journey to Abraham's world, his longing for a son and the heartbreak of finding out that he may lose him. But perhaps the most fascinating encounter, as explained by Rabbi Sacks zt"l, is what seems to be an argument between Abraham and

God. The people of Sodom, it seems, were undeserving of mercy and acted wickedly. They had been condemned for destruction by God. Yet Abraham insisted on trying to find even ten righteous individuals for whom the rest would be worth saving.

Why, we may ask, did Abraham dare to challenge God's decisions? Rabbi Sacks explains that the key to understanding this issue is to view it not as a human challenge to God but as God's challenge to all of us. God requires us as Abraham's descendants to become agents of justice, involving conversation, dialogue and constructive argument. God empowered Abraham and consequently all of us to become His partners in the administration of

justice and to seek it wherever we go, even if this involves challenging Him.

This is perhaps the key takeaway from this week's parasha, and we should regard it as our religious duty to resist acts of injustice and do our best to ensure the world we live in is a place of fairness and kindness. This behaviour became typically associated with the prophets. Living in unfriendly environments and facing ridicule and mockery, people such as Isaiah and Jeremiah were unafraid to call out corruption and injustice in the society around them, even when it did them no personal favours. This precedent has carried great weight throughout our history and remains a call to action as relevant today as it ever was.

Parasha Anagrams

Unscramble the words to make sense of these sentences.

1. Abraham was visited by HUGEST TREES
2. Abraham argued with God to save the people of MOODS
3. Lot's wife turned into a PITFALL SOLAR
4. Lot hid in a cave with his HUGS TRADE
5. Hagar and Yishmael were sent out into the desert of SHAVER BEE
6. Abraham's greatest test is known as HAZY I CAKED AT KIT
7. Abraham is told his offspring will be like the RATSS and the DANS