

Shabbat Shalom!

Thank you for coming. I am so happy that all my friends and family are here with me today.

My Torah portion is Vayera which comes from the book of Genesis. Today I am going to talk about Abraham. Him and his wife Sarah had left their families and moved to the land of Canaan as part of a covenant that Abraham had made with God where God promises to make Abrahams descendants into a great nation.

The part of my torah portion that spoke to me the most was when Abraham was in his tent one very hot afternoon. He was in his tent lying down on the floor and he looked up and saw three people walking in the desert. The three men didn't look ill or hurt. They were simply walking near Abraham's tent. When Abraham saw them he ran up to them and offered them food and water and to come into his tent. He asked Sarah to help him prepare a fancy meal for them and also gave them what they needed to wash their feet and cool down a little.

Why would he do that? He didn't even know who they were?

I think Abraham was just a generous person.

The three people ended up being angels!

They sat down in the shade ate and drank. Finally before they left they promised Abraham that in exactly one year God would give him a son. Abraham was rewarded for his hospitality even though he had no expectations.

This story reflects on my life, for example there was a new family that just moved into our neighborhood right before Passover. We invited

them to have dinner with our friends and family. They didn't know anyone in our town but met a lot of people that night at our house. They were so grateful. It made my family and I feel good to welcome someone and make them feel at home. The torah portion that I read was perfect for me because our house, like Abraham's tent is always open so that no one is left alone if we can help it. This has taught me how to care for and give to others.

But there might also be another answer...

In the torah it says that Abraham raised his eyes to look up to the men that were walking by. Which means that he was not expecting any guests. Knowing that these were Angels sent by God, I think he looked up because he felt god's presence near him. Abraham spent most of his adult life proving to god his faith, and doing things god asked him to do. Abraham was very lucky because god communicated with him, and he always felt safe because he knew god was there with him. Abraham has to prove his faith over and over by doing things that seem unreasonable or don't make sense. But then Abraham is rewarded time and time again and this helps him get stronger and have an even deeper connection to God.

I hope that as I grow and my faith is tested I too will be like Abraham and make good choices. I plan to continue studying Torah so that I can become a better Jewish person and feel that connection to God as well.

In addition to studying Torah I also plan to continue doing mitzvot whenever I can. Many mitzvot are ones that just happen without being planned and often these are the ones that mean the most but there are times when we can plan to do mitzvot as well. This holiday season as a tribute to my becoming a Bat Mitzvah, my mom, sister and I will be baking and cooking for the teenage girls who currently live at the Nelle Smith residence, which is a foster group home in West Palm

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Beach. We hope to help make their holidays a little brighter. I have come to realize that like Abraham, reaching out to strangers actually not only fills Tikun Olam but gives me a sense of joy.
Thank you.

I would especially like to give a special thank you to :