

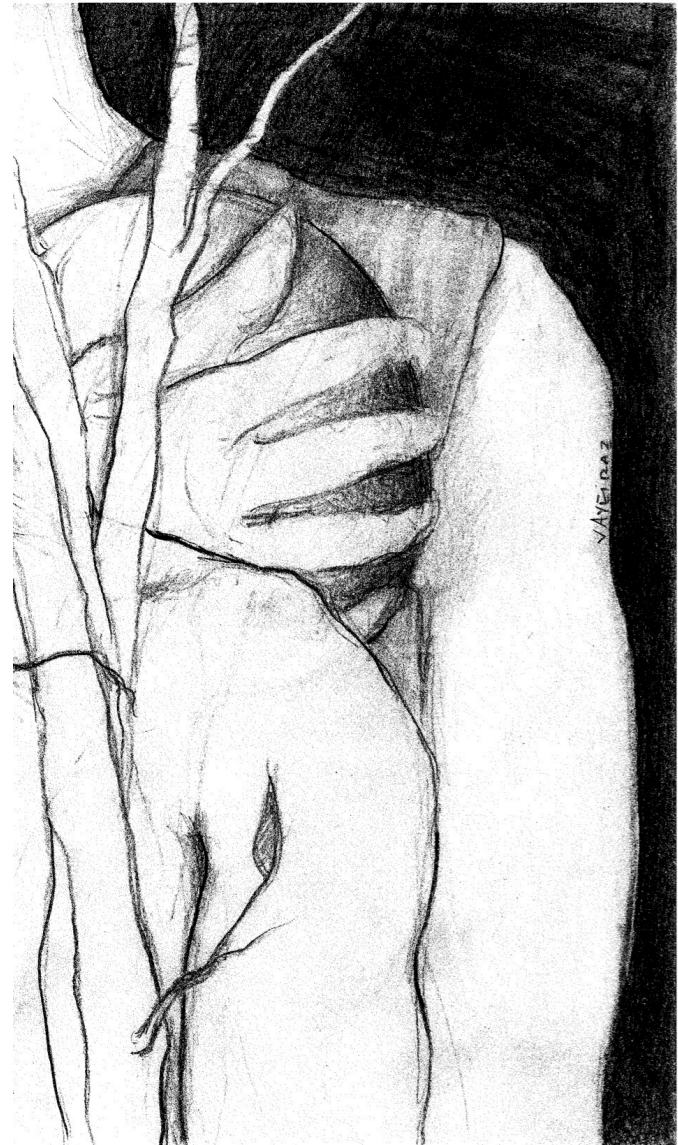
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THIS IS A WEEKLY LIST OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PORTIONS OF THE BIBLE READ BY JEWISH COMMUNITIES EVERY SABBATH, WITH COVER ART BY OUR FRIENDS. DO YOU LIKE OUR PROJECT? DO YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS OR ANOTHER PARSHA? SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS AT: [persnicketyfinicker@gmail.com](mailto:persnicketyfinicker@gmail.com)

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GENESIS 18-22

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**Q1:** Why is Sarah rebuked for laughing, when Abraham also laughed at the news of their fertility and met no censure?

**Q2:** What is the significance of laughter, and its several valences of mirth, scorn, and sexual play? Why does it become the namesake for the next generation of this family? (see 17:17-19, 18:12-15, 21:3, 6, 9, 26:8)

**Q3:** This dialogue between God and Abraham about Sodom - why the repetition? Is it a negotiation? If so, who has the upper hand? Is Abraham teaching God something incrementally? If so, what?

**Q4:** Despite Abraham's protracted protest, Sodom is in fact destroyed. What was the point of all that? Do we learn something about divine justice?

**Q5:** Is there a connection between God and Abraham's dialogue on Sodom and the subsequent salvation of Lot? Is Lot saved for being righteous? For Abraham's righteousness?

**Q6:** Why can't Lot convince his sons-in-law to come with him? Why does he linger? Why is he afraid of the hill country?

**Q7:** Why do Lot's daughters believe their father is the only man left alive if they just left the inhabited city of Zoar?

**Q8:** In a book which is usually very quiet about intentions, Abraham and Abimelech talk a lot about them. This seems reminiscent of Adam and Eve's justifications before God (3:12-13). Why are intentions only relevant when they're excuses?

**Q9:** Why does Abraham pass Sarah off as his sister a second time? What has he learned or not learned from his experience in Egypt?

**Q10:** Why does Abraham make a great feast on the day Isaac is weaned?

**Q11:** Why must Abraham send away his eldest son? Is his rejection of Ishmael necessary to enforce his devotion to Sarah?

**Q12:** Compare the perils of Isaac to the perils of Ishmael. Does Hagar pass a test?

**Q13:** As Abraham and Isaac hike up the mountain, what do they believe about God's repeated promise of countless progeny? Was it a lie? Is it because Abraham failed in some way that the promise is withdrawn? Is it possible for them to simultaneously carry out God's word and believe in God's promise?

**Q14:** Is the binding of Isaac a once-and-for-all achievement, or is it, in some way, a blueprint for the activities of future generations? (That is, what does it mean to *learn from* it?).

**Q15:** What are angels for in this book? Compare their function to that of the voice of God.

**Q16:** Maimonides, and many other commentators, attribute the divine experiences in this book to dreams and visions. If so, what does it mean for a reader of this text that there is little distinction between dream and waking life?