

PARSHAT VAYERA  
GENESIS 18:1-22:24  
HAFTARAH II KINGS 4:1-37  
18 CHESHVAN 5784/02 NOVEMBER 2023



*Reflection Model (Rashomon)*  
Wood sculpture by Takahiro Iwasaki

## RASHOMON GATE

1. God appeared to Abraham by the terebinths of Mamre, as he sat there at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, three *anashim* (men) were standing near him. He saw them and he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed down. He said, *Adonai*, if I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass on from your servant....The men set out from there and looked out upon Sodom, and Abraham walked with them to send them off....God said, “The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great....The men turned from there and went on to Sodom... (Genesis 18:1-22)
2. וַיֵּרָא / “God appeared” (Genesis 18:1). Verb “to see” in niph'al form.  
  
וַיֵּרָא / “God will appear” (Genesis 22:14). Verb “to see” in niph'al form.

3. Rabbi Shimon said: When God was about to create Adam, the ministering angels split into contending groups. Some said, "Let Adam be created." Others said, "Let him not be created." That is why it is written: "Mercy and truth collided, righteousness and peace clashed" (Psalm 85:11). The Holy Blessed One took truth and threw it to the ground. The angels said, "Sovereign of the Universe, why do You do this? Let truth arise from the ground." Thus it is written, "Let truth spring up from the earth" (Psalm 85:12). (B'reishit Rabbah 8:5)
  
4. This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

(Rumi, "The Guest House")