Chomer Lidrush

Some ideas to turn your gears heading into Parshas Vayeira.

An Angel Is Enough to Save

In Mesoras Menachem, the volume in honor of R' Menachem Genack, Rav Chaim Leib Ilson relates in the name of the Rav that when the Beis HaLevi taught the Akeidah to his son Rav Chaim, then three or four years old, the child asked why "kach na es bincha" came from Hashem Himself while "al tishlach yadcha el hana'ar" came through a malach. The Rav paired it with a second story. When Rav Chaim of Volozhin, at the Gra's instruction, asked the gedolim to sign a cherem "by the command of the Gra, a malach Hashem Tzevakos," Rav Raphael of Hamburg declined: the Akeidah teaches that saving a life can come through a malach, but a decree of death requires Hashem Himself, and a cherem is a kind of death. This piece can focus on demanding more certainty before we act in a way that could hurt someone, and less before we act to help. It also makes an excellent shiur, as Rav Ilson works through the Rambam, under whose levels of nevuah the question seems to turn upside down, and the Ramban (Bereishis 18:1), under whose approach both the question and Rav Raphael's answer hold.

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