



Parshas Vayera 2019, the journey of faith

The Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha has the Akeida's Yitzchak, the binding of Yitzchak. It is one of the most fundamental and meaningful Jewish stories. The Torah portion begins with G-d telling Avraham that he will fulfill his promise of a successor with the birth of a baby boy. One year later, Sarah gave birth to Yitzchak, who looked exactly like his father, Avraham.

When Yitzchak was 37 years old, Hashem appeared to Avraham and told him, *"Kach Na Es Bincha, Es Yechidecha, Asher Ahavta, Es Yitzchak, Velech Lecha El Eretz HaMoriah, Vaha'alehu Sham Le' Olah— Take your son, your only one, the one whom you love, Yitzchak, and go to the land of Moriah where you will bring him up as an offering on one of the mountains there."*

Avraham did as he was told; the next morning, he took Yitzchak along with the necessary supplies and headed out to the mountains. When they arrived, Avraham built an altar and tied Yitzchak to it.

But as he was about to slaughter his son, an angel ordered him to stop immediately and sacrifice a ram that was nearby in place of Yitzchak. Hashem then blessed Avraham with great blessings as a reward for passing his final and most challenging test yet.

This is a fundamental story in Judaism is not only because it shows us two people whose devotion to the will and desire of G-d surpassed their own, even to their own detriment.

As Yitzchak was willing to give up his life for Hashem, Avraham was about to slaughter his inheritor, something he had waited for 100 years. But rather because they both followed Hashem's commandment enthusiastically and wholeheartedly.

We see by Avraham that when G-d instructed him to offer up his son as a sacrifice, he did not complain. Rather, he woke up even earlier than usual to fulfill his directive.

As the Pasuk says (22:3) ***“Vayashkem Avraham Baboker — Avraham got up early in the morning.”*** Rashi quotes the Gemora in Pesachim (4a) that it is from here we learn the important principle of זריזין מקדימין למצות, that we must be zealous when fulfilling each Mitzvah and perform them as soon as it is permitted to do so.

Similarly with Yitzchak, when he finally found out that he was indeed the sacrifice, the Pasuk says, (22:8) ***“Vayelchu Shneihem Yachdav—They both went together.”*** Rashi writes that even though they both now knew what was about to occur, they equally were both ready and eager to carry Hashem's commandment.

This is why this story is read on Rosh Hashanah because this story evokes G-d's mercy and immense love for the Jewish people. In His great mercy, we then are signed and sealed with only revealed good for the coming year.

Many significant lessons can be learned from this compelling story; all are paramount to our spiritual and physical lives. First and foremost, we must trust in Hashem and believe that all He does is good. For it is our trust in G-d that has sustained us through unspeakable tragedies that plague our history.

From the Spanish Inquisition to the Holocaust, it has and will always be faith in Hashem that will carry us through it. And with each Mitzvah we perform, we strengthen our bond and connection with G-d, allowing us to develop a deeper and more profound relationship with Him.

“Aleph, beis, gimmel. Emunah plus bitachon equals Geulah—Faith and trust in G-d will bring redemption.”

Rabbi Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin

Have a great Shabbos!

Rabbi Sholom Yemini