

# Kinder Torah

כ"ד

## Parashas Haazinu

### The Akeida

“**A**vi, please listen to this interesting halacha. ‘It is good to say the parasha of the *Akeida*’ [the binding of Yitzchak on the altar] (Tur and Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 1:5).”

“Do the *meforshim* explain the reason for this, Abba?”

“Yes, Avi. To remember the *zechus avos* (merits of our forefathers). Additionally we should be inspired to subdue our *yetzer hara* in the same way that Yitzchak Avinu was willing to give up his life to serve Hashem. The Mishna Breurah (in the name of the Magen Avraham) adds that it is not sufficient to merely say the words. We must contemplate them, the deeds they describe, and recognize the wonders of Hashem.”

“I am ready, Abba. What is the message of the *Akeida*?”

“Let us begin with the short requests that we make before and after saying the parasha, Avi. We ask Hashem to recall (on our behalf) the love that our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yisrael had for Him. Additionally, we ask Him to remember the covenant, the *chesed* (kindness), the oath that He swore to Avraham Avinu on Har HaMoriah, and the *Akeida*, where he bound Yitzchak his son on the altar. Let us break this down into steps, Avi. Firstly, Hashem tested Avraham. In the course of the *Akeida*, Yitzchak was also tested. They both passed the test, performing an awesome act of *chesed* for Hashem, which was so influential that we still reap its benefits thousands of years later. Secondly, we recall and contemplate this event in our daily prayers. Thirdly, this inspires us to overcome our *yetzer hara* and become as self-sacrificing as our forefathers were. Lastly, we entreat Hashem in the merit of the kindness of the *Avos*, which has carried down thru the generations to our own deeds, to act mercifully with us, save us, and fulfill the covenants that He made with Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.”

“**T**hat is quite impressive, Abba. I am ready to study the *Akeida* and learn its lessons.”

“Okay Avi. The Ohr HaChaim explains that the *Akeida* was the last and most difficult of the ten tests of Avraham Avinu. We are commanded in *Kriyas Shema* to love Hashem with all of our hearts (emotions), all of our souls (lives), and all of our might (possessions). The *Akeida* was a test of all three. The verse (Bereshis 22:2) refers to this when it states, ‘your son’. This corresponds to ‘all of your

heart,’ for there is nothing as dear to a father’s heart as his child. ‘Your only one’ relates to ‘all of your souls.’ For Avraham to kill his only his only child would be like killing himself, for a person without children is not considered alive. ‘Whom you love’ refers to ‘with all of your might’ (possessions). As much as a person enjoys his material belongings, they are worth nothing compared to his offspring. And so, Avraham Avinu was tested on all three levels. How did he relate to this test? He arose early in the morning, saddled his own donkey, split his own wood, took his son and his servants to do this great mitzvah. He did not hesitate one moment, nor did he allow anyone else to perform any part of the mitzvah. He was happy to fulfill Hashem’s will.”

“What dedication, Abba! What Yiras Shomayim! What Ahavas Hashem! I am beginning to appreciate the exaltedness of Avraham Avinu.”

“Yes, Avi. Now I will tell you about Yitzchak. Targum Yonason ben Uziel (Bereshis 22:1) relates a conversation between Yitzchak and Yishmael about who was more worthy to

inherit Avraham. Yishmael claims that he is the true heir because he is the *bechor* (firstborn). Yitzchak counters by saying that he is the *bechor* of Avraham’s wife, Sara, while Yishmael is only the *bechor* of the maid-servant, Hagar. Yishmael lays another claim to the inheritance by recalling that he willingly underwent *milah* at the age of thirteen. He had the option to refuse. Yitzchak, on the other hand, had his *bris milah* at the age of eight days and therefore had no choice in the matter. Perhaps if he had been given the option, he would have declined. Yitzchak replied, ‘I am now 36 years old. If Hashem wants all of my 248 limbs I will not refuse Him.’ His words were heard immediately, and Hashem began the *nisayon* (test).”

“**A**stounding.”

“Yes Avi. Yitzchak Avinu had no misgivings about sacrificing his life for Hashem. From the deeds and intentions of our holy forefathers we see how deep and far reaching our service to the Almighty must be. You should know, Avi, that the reward for this is unfathomable. We still reap the benefits of *Akeidas Yitzchak* to this very day. The *Yaavetz* relates that one who says the parasha of the *Akeida*

every day with tremendous *kavannah* (concentration) and contemplation is saved from death at the hands of man and horrible diseases. His sins are forgiven. The Siddur Shaar HaRachamim cites the Zohar which states that reading the *Akeida* each day protects us from the tribulations of *golus* (exile). A voice booms out saying, ‘Do not do anything to him! (Yitzchak)’ (Bereshis 22:12). So too, the nations of the world will not do anything to us. Similarly, on Rosh Hashana we all stand in judgment before the heavenly court. The evil prosecutors try to condemn us with their accusations. The King of kings assures us, ‘Do not fear. Recall the *zechus* of the *Akeida*. Blow the shofar. I will recall the shofar of the ram that was sacrificed in place of Yitzchak which will fill Me with *rachmonus* (mercy) for you. I will not allow the evil one to touch you.”

“That is tremendous, Abba. The Torah itself also describes the great blessings that Avraham and Yitzchak would receive from the *Akeida*. Their descendants would become as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand on the beach. They would inherit their enemies’ gates. All of the nations of the world would be blessed in their merit. You have inspired me to contemplate and say the *Akeida* every day, Abba.”

“May you merit all of its blessings Avi.”  
“Amen.”

*Kinderlach* . . .

*Akeidas Yitzchak is an event so awesome, that it is almost beyond our comprehension. Avraham Avinu spent his entire life teaching the ways of Hashem. One of the pagan practices that he thoroughly condemned was child sacrifice. Imagine how completely devastating it would be for him, after over 130 years of preaching against child sacrifice, he sacrificed his own son. He would be the laughing stock of the world. All of his efforts in bringing people close to the Devar Hashem would be ruined. Yet he was prepared, willing, and even happy to do it. Fulfilling the Almighty’s will was his only concern in life. If it meant starting over again from scratch at his age, he would do it. It the merit of this incomparable love for the Creator, along with Yitzchak’s readiness to give up his life, we receive inspiration and protection to this very day. Take advantage of it kinderlach. Be inspired by Akeidas Yitzchak to reach the highest heights in Avodas Hashem, and receive all the blessings and protection that it brings.*

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