

Rosh Hashanah Day 2 5782

Source Sheet by Rabbi Zachary A. Present

Genesis 22:1-19

(1) Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am." (2) And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you." (3) So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him. (4) On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. (5) Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you." (6) Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together. (7) Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the

בראשית כ"ב:א'-י"ט

(א) וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי: (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִחְזָקָה אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבָתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ: (ג) וַיִּשְׁכַּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חֲמֹרוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֲלָה וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים: (ד) בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מְרֻחָק: (ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נְעָרָיו שְׁבוּ־לָכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּזֶר נִלְכָּה עַד־כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם: (ו) וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצֵי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֹת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי הָאֵשׁ וְהַנֶּזֶר וַיֹּאמֶר וַאֲנִי הַשֶּׁה לְעֹלָה: (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יְרָאֵה־לּוֹ הַשֶּׁה

burnt offering?” (8) And Abraham said, “God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them walked on together. (9) They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. (10) And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. (11) Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.” (12) And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me.” (13) When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.

לְעֹלָה בְנֵי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: (ט)
וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לֹ
הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְנוּ שָׁם אֹבֶדָהּ
אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֶךְ אֶת־הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹד
אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
מִמַּעַל לָעֵצִים: (י) וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹבֶדָהּ
אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמַּאֲכֵלֶת לְשַׁחֵט
אֶת־בְּנוֹ: (יא) וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלְּאָה
יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר
אֹבֶדָהּ | אֹבֶדָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּנְנִי: (יב)
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנֶּעֱר
וְאֶל־תַּעַשׂ לִי מְאוּמָה כִּי וְעַתָּה
יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה וְלֹא
חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יַחֲדָהּ מִמֶּנִּי:
(יג) וַיִּשָּׂא אֹבֶדָהּ אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא
וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל אַחֵר נָאֲתָנוּ בַּסֶּבֶךְ בְּקַרְנָיו
וַיִּלֶּךְ אֹבֶדָהּ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֵיל
וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֹלָה תַחַת בְּנוֹ:

Ramban on Genesis 22:1:1

AND GOD TRIED ABRAHAM. The matter of “trial,” in my opinion, is as follows: Since a man’s deeds are at his absolute free command, to perform them or not to perform them at his will, on the part of one who is tried it is called “a trial.” But on the part of

רמב"ן על בראשית כ"ב:א:א'

והאלקים נסה את אברהם ענין הנסיון הוא לדעתי בעבור היות מעשה האדם רשות מוחלטת בידו אם ירצה יעשה ואם לא ירצה לא יעשה יקרא "נסיון" מצד המנוסה

the One, blessed be [God], who tries the person, it is a command that the one being tested should bring forth the matter from the potential into actuality so that he may be rewarded for a good deed, not for a good thought alone.

Know further that *God trieth the righteous*, for knowing that the righteous will do [God's] will, [God] desires to make him even more upright, and so commands him to undertake a test, but [God] does not try the wicked, who would not obey. Thus all trials in the Torah are for the good of the one who is being tried.

Do we agree with Ramban? Is this test for Abraham only because he is worthy of it? If so, is it successful? "All trials in the Torah are for the good of the one who is being tried" - How does this experience make Abraham better?

Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 23:8

Thereupon, the Holy One, blessed be [God], opened the sky and the cloud and said: "*By myself have I sworn,*" saith the Lord (ibid., v. 16). "You have sworn." Abraham replied, "and now I swear that I shall not descend from this altar until I say what I wish to say." "Speak," [God] answered. "Did You not tell me," said Abraham, "*Count all the stars, if thou be able to count them; so shall thy seed be* (Gen. 15:5)?" "Yes," [God] replied. "But from whom shall my seed descend?" queried Abraham. "From Isaac," the

אבל המנסה יתברך יצוה בו להוציא הדבר מן הכח אל הפועל להיות לו שכר מעשה טוב לא שכר לב טוב בלבד דע כי השם צדיק יבחן (תהלים י"א:ה') כשהוא יודע בצדיק שיעשה רצונו וחפץ להצדיקו יצוה אותו בנסיון ולא יבחן את הרשעים אשר לא ישמעו והנה כל הנסיונות שבתורה לטובת המנוסה:

מדרש תנחומא, וירא כ"ג:ח'

מִיָּד פָּתַח הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הַרְקִיעַ וְאֶת הָעֲרָפֶל, וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם ה'. אָמַר לוֹ: אַתָּה נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ. וְאַנִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי שְׁלֹא אֵרֵד מִן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַד שְׂאֵמֵר כָּל מָה שְׂאֵנִי צָרִיקָה. אָמַר לוֹ: אֲמֹר. לֹא כִּךָ אֶמְרָתָ לִי, וּסְפֹר הַכּוֹכָבִים אִם תּוּכַל לְסַפֵּר אֹתָם כֹּה יִהְיֶה זְרָעָה. אָמַר לוֹ: הֵן. אָמַר לוֹ: מִמִּי? אָמַר לוֹ: מִיִּצְחָק. אָמַר לוֹ: כִּשְׁם שְׁהִיָּה בְלִבִּי מָה לְהַשִּׁיבָה וְלוֹמַר לָהּ, אֶתְמוּל אֶמְרָתָ

Holy One answered. "It was in my heart, yesterday, to remind You that You told me that Isaac was my seed, when You said to me: *Take him for a burnt-offering*. But I restrained myself and did not challenge You.

Therefore, when Isaac's descendants sin and are being oppressed, recall the binding of Isaac, reckon it as if his ashes were piled upon the altar, and pardon them and release them from their anguish."

לִי כִי בִּיצְחָק יִקְרָא לְךָ זֶרַע, עֲכָשׁוּ
אֶתְּךָ אֹמֵר לִי הֲעֵלְהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה,
וְכַבֵּשְׁתִּי אֶת יִצְחָק וְלֹא הִשְׁבַּתִּיהָ, כִּי
כְשִׁיחִיו בְּנָיו שָׁל יִצְחָק חוֹטְאִין
וְנִכְנָסִין לְצָרָה, תִּהְיֶה נִזְכָּר לְךָ
עֲקָדְתוֹ שָׁל יִצְחָק וְתַחֲשֹׁב לְפָנֶיךָ
כְּאִלּוּ אָפְרוּ צְבוּר עַל גְּבִי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וְתִסְלַח לָהֶן וְתִפְדֶּם מִצָּרָתָן.

This Midrash explains that Abraham did not want to sacrifice Isaac, and may not have been as willing as the text seems at first? Does this Midrash redeem Abraham for you? Does it change how you feel about him in the story? For better or for worse?

Heritage - Haim Gouri

The ram came last of all. And Abraham did not know that it came to answer the boy's question – first of his strength when his day was on the wane. The old man raised his head. Seeing that it was no dream and that the angel stood there – the knife slipped from his hand. The boy, released from his bonds, saw his father's back. Isaac, as the story goes, was not sacrificed. He lived for many years, saw what pleasure had to offer, until his eyesight dimmed. But he bequeathed that hour to his offspring. They are born with a knife in their hearts.

Haim Gouri, the famous Israeli poet, writes about the future generations, and the lasting impact the events of the Akedah have on their lives. How does this poem change the Akedah for you?