

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Parshav Vayeira - Akeidas Yitzchak - an insight

Today's Parsha, Vayeira, ends with the story of the Akeidas Yitzchak, where Avraham takes Yitzchak to be bound on the altar and offered as a sacrifice to Hashem.

I understood it differently today seeing it after I wrote the blog article, "The only thing to fear is (misplaced) fear itself" <http://lvracha.com/2011/11/11/the-only-thing-to-fear-is-misplaced-fear-itself.aspx>

What do we know about Yitzchak's reaction to going up the mountain? Did he comprehend what Avraham was going to do? Why was he not afraid to suffer death at his father's hand? Is there reason to believe that WAS his first reaction? What we do know is that Yitzchak understood and went willingly, asking his father to bind him so that by natural reaction he would not flinch and acquire a bruise that would invalidate his sacrifice.

Had Yitzchak been thinking of his own survival, of himself as a separate entity, we would imagine that he would run away rather than allow someone to slaughter him. But Yitzchak went with Avraham, with one consciousness, a consciousness that they were both connected to Hashem's consciousness, that Avraham would be doing only the will of the Creator. Both of them had to "offer to Hashem" on the altar of their free will, their emotional attachments to everything physical and tangible that man's ordinary five senses tell us to trust. Both of them with complete clarity comprehended the matter with consciousness in harmony with the Source of consciousness, Hashem.

We are obviously not on the level of Avraham and Yitzchak. But when reading the Akeida, which we read every day, perhaps we can grow closer in comprehending that our emotions belong first to love and fear of Hashem, and when we direct our hearts in this way, we develop a passionate and palpable sense of closeness to Hashem which becomes more and more trustworthy over time. In essence, this would mean that our emotional attachments would become connected to ruchnius, to spiritual connection, in devekus, and from there outward to our sphere of family, friends, work, and more.

Perhaps we could even go further to say that any emotion that is NOT first attached to love and fear of Hashem is a great beginning to help us draw closer to Hashem. How?

"I see that I am gripping an emotion towardand I am very bonded with this (idea, item, value, person, etc). But I also see that this is not necessarily an expression of one of the Divine attributes that Hashem has bestowed upon me, through my soul. I am a little afraid to let go of this because the attachment has been vital to my success in the area of However, I recognize that my consciousness is at this very moment connected to Hashem's consciousness and is being given to me for my lifetime in order for me to use it in a manner that will be pleasing to Hashem, in concert with Torah, avoda and chesed. How do I resolve the distance between the emotion as it is attached and what I know to be the way Hashem is hoping I will use my consciousness, to love and fear only Him? I don't know how I can ever change the way I currently feel, but I do know that I would like the will power to be able to direct my emotions to love and fear of Hashem. Dear Hashem please give me the will power to match these emotions, and I direct my heart, I direct these emotions to love and fear Hashem."

In this way, slowly, perhaps we can give up our fear of being without certain attachments that, in reality, are taking us away from love and fear of Hashem.