

דבר אל-בני ישראל, ואמרת אליהם,
כי תבאו אל-הארץ, אשר אני נתן לכם
ושבתה הארץ, שבת לה'

SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

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WHAT WAS AVRAHAM REALLY THINKING?

ADI DINOWITZ
SHEVET AVICHAH

Akeidat Yitzchak is one of the most famous stories in our history that emphasised to us

how great our forefather, Avraham, really was. He was willing to sacrifice his own son purely because that's what G-d asked of him. However, a question that has always bothered me, how can we believe that Avraham went into Akeidat Yitzchak thinking that Yitzchak was going to die? We saw in last week's Parasha (Pasuk 17:21), Hashem said to Avraham; "ואתבריתי אקים אתך". יצחק אשר תלך שרה למועד הזה בשנה האחרת. We see from this that G-d explicitly said that through Yitzchak He will fulfil the Brit bein Ha'Betarim through him and not through his other son Yishmael. If this is the case, when Avraham is on his way to sacrifice Yitzchak, what does that mean? He knows the Brit is going to be fulfilled through Yitzchak and thus knows he is going to survive. What happened so that Avraham thinks he is going to be sacrificing his son or if he didn't then what does he think is about to happen? If his challenge isn't to kill his son, then what is?

An interesting thought from Rabbi Zvi Grumet whose take on Sefer Bereishit is that it's a book all about family values. His reason as to why Avraham was selected as the one through which G-d meets the world and whose descendants are chosen to be G-d's nation is because he possesses the values of tzedek and mishpat but most importantly, family values. His strong sense of family value, which was a rare value at the time, is seen with the fact he took his orphaned nephew, Lot, in and how he took the barren and orphaned Sarah and still married her. So according to Rabbi Grumet's reading of

Bereishit, it was this strong value that was the reason Avraham was chosen and that's what drove a lot of Avraham's tests.

This then gives the story of Akeidat Yitzchak a whole new meaning. The test was not "will you kill your son for Me?" but rather, "Will you sacrifice your relationship with your son and your wife for me. Your two most familial relationships. Are you willing to give those up for Me?" that is what the test was.

What happened on top of the mountain changed Avraham's and Yitzchak's relationship forever. It was the point of no return. Seeing anyone standing over you with a knife, will undoubtedly change the way you feel towards them afterwards. Afterwards it says; "וישב אברהם", Avraham comes down from the mountain alone, without Yitzchak. However, it specifically says that they go together when they were going up the mountain; "וילכו ויניהם יחדו". The text shows that a wedge has been driven in their relationship.

Agreed that this however, may not seem as big of a test as sacrificing your son on an altar for G-d, but when put in the context of the strong values that Avraham had and that he was chosen based off these values, it creates a very strong dichotomy about if he will sacrifice his most important value and relationship on an altar for G-d and that becomes a very big challenge for Avraham indeed.

**ADI DINOWITZ IS THE ROSH AT SALFORD SVIVA AND
WAS A MADRICHA ON BET CHALUTZI MACHANE 5778.**

London	In: 17:26	Out: 18:32	Cambridge	In: 17:24	Out: 18:30	Oxford	In: 17:30	Out: 18:36
Manchester	In: 17:30	Out: 18:36	Bristol	In: 17:36	Out: 18:42	Liverpool	In: 17:33	Out: 18:39
Leeds	In: 17:26	Out: 18:32	Birmingham	In: 17:31	Out: 18:37	Jerusalem	In: 17:15	Out: 18:44

THE TESTING GROUND

RAV AHARON HERSKOVITZ | RAV SHALIACH



In this week's parasha, we are told of Hashem's testing Avraham by commanding him to bring his son Yitzchak as a korban. The story

is introduced as follows (Pasuk 22:1):

“יהי אחר הדברים האלה והאלוקים ניסה את אברהם”

The word ניסה, is normally translated as “test”, though the midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 55:1) points out that can also be understood as an attempt to publicise something impressive, and wave it, as if it is a banner or flag. The midrash does so by quoting the verse from Tehillim (60:6):

“נתת ליראיך נס להתנוסס”

“You will give those who fear you a banner to wave.”

The events that follow are intended not (only) as a test, but as a way to signify and publicise Avraham's greatness and commitment to Hashem.

While commenting on this purpose of the test, the Ramban (22:1) explains:

“And God tested Avraham: The point of the test is, in my opinion, that a person has the absolute authority to decide to perform any specific action; (in other words), if they desire they can do an action, and if they desire not to do it, they will not do it. It is called a “nissayon” [test] for the individual being tested [e.g., Avraham], but the blessed Tester will command him to bring out the thing from potential to actuality, so as to give a reward for a good action and not just a reward for a good heart. Know that “Hashem examines the righteous” (Psalms 11:5): when He knows that a righteous person will act according to His will, but still seeks [that person to act with] their righteousness, He will command him to a test. But He does not test

the wicked, since they would anyways not hear. And behold, every test in the Torah is for the good of the one being tested.”

In other words, the tests mentioned in the Torah are very different from tests we are familiar with from school and other settings. In a school, a teacher will want to ascertain if students have absorbed certain knowledge or skills. The test is intended to examine or discover something. Were there to be a way to do an internal check to know if the knowledge or skills had been absorbed, such a test would be extraneous.

The tests in the Torah are different, not meant to examine or discover anything, for Hashem already knows a person's inner workings: rather the test is intended to actualise potential. To take a person's abilities and skills and make them qualitatively different by bringing them from

the world of potential to the world of actuality.

Each one of us has been gifted unique abilities to make Hashem's world a better place. If we do nothing with these abilities, they remain just that: abilities, potential. Hashem gives us not only the underlying abilities, but also opportunities, many opportunities to take those abilities and actualise them, to bring them into being. It is our mission to not waste these abilities, to not just be someone of whom it can be said “He/she has so much potential”, but to take advantage of the opportunities we are given to express them and use all “tests” we are given. May we all merit to identify the situations in which we are being tested and take full advantage of them.

Shabbat Shalom!

**THE TESTS IN THE TORAH
ARE MEANT NOT TO
EXAMINE OR DISCOVER
SOMETHING, BUT
TO ACTUALISE POTENTIAL**

DVAR HALACHA: WEEKLY QUESTION WITH RAV AHARON



Question: Is there any point that you can adjust a Shabbat timer? If so, how can you do it?

Answer: The following

principles apply regarding changing a Shabbat-clock setting on Shabbat and Yom Tov (based off of the pesak in the Shemirat Shabbat KiHilchata 13:25-31). I hope that the summary and explanation are clear.

1) You may change it to make the **current state last longer**. In other words, if it is currently off, you may change it so that it stays off for longer. If it is currently on, you can make it stay on for longer (also known as having it turn off later). This is as opposed to an actual candle, which cannot be “extended” because doing so is an actual addition of fuel; here you are

merely preventing the “turning off” from taking place until later.

2) You may **not have the current state end any earlier**. In other words, if it's on you can't make it turn off earlier, and if it's off you can't have it turn on earlier. **However, on Yom Tov, you can make it turn on earlier** than it would have (but not turn off earlier).

3) When you are in the current state, you can affect the ending of the next state. In other words, if it is currently on, you can make it so that when it will go on again at a later (second) time, it will do so earlier. If it is currently off, you can change it so that after it will turn on, it will turn off again earlier than it would have before.

TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL RAV AHARON AT RAV@BAUK.ORG

A TASTE FROM ISRAEL

ARON LIPCZER



For those of you who don't know me, I'm Aron Lipczer, born and raised in London and a very keen Edgware BAnik. On the 22nd of August -just after getting home from

an incredible Bet Base machane in Spain- I made my lifelong dream of Aliyah a reality. But this comes with the realisation that I have left England for the foreseeable future and will be somewhat disconnected with BAUK, a movement which is one of the main reasons for my Aliyah. So, the idea for me to write an article in Shabbat Lashem with personal anecdotes from my experiences in Israel and from the IDF in March every so often was formed with help from friends. I look forward to sharing those with you in the months to come.

Whilst last week's parsha has the more obvious go to topic of Aliyah, I thought I would put a

different spin on it, with a message relating to all of us. The Zohar wrecks Noach for standing around being an 'innocent' bystander as the generation around him committed countless atrocities, and this passivity from Noach was a cause of the flood. This brings a perfect dichotomy when paralleled with Avram in the following parasha. Whilst Noach was bashed for his passivity, Avraham was praised for his activeness in spreading the word of Hashem and putting things right. Pasuk 12:5 says "And Avram took Sarai his wife ... and the souls they had acquired in Charan". Rashi explains that these 'souls' were those 'whom Avram had brought under the wings of the shechina'.

A message we can take from this dichotomy is that we should always strive to put right what's wrong, no matter what environment we are in, be it on campus, in our communities or wherever, we have the responsibility and #opportunity (shout out to Torani 5778) as Jews to do the right thing and help others do the right thing.

ARON LIPCZER IS IN SHEVET AVICHAI AND WAS A MADRICH ON BET BASE MACHANE 5778

