

TORAH STUDY

Parashat Vayera : GEN 18:1-22:24

Baruch Atah Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסּוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who makes us holy by giving us commandment, and commands us to engage in the study of Torah.

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC “PLAYING” GENESIS 22

RASHI Gen 21 9

This means worshipping idols, as it is said in reference of the Golden Calf, ([Exodus 32:6](#)) “And they rose up to make merry (לצחק).” Another explanation is that it refers to immoral conduct, just as you say in reference to Potiphar’s wife, ([Genesis 39:17](#)) “To mock (לצחק) at me.” Another explanation is that it refers to murder, as ([2 Samuel 2:14](#)) “Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and make sport (וישחקו) before us” (where they fought with and killed one another) From Sarah’s reply — “for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son” — you may infer that he (Ishmael) was quarrelling with Isaac about the inheritance, saying, “I am the first-born and will, therefore, take a double portion”. They went into the field and he (Ishmael) took his and shot arrows at him (Isaac), just as you say ([Proverbs 26:18-19](#)) “As a madman who casteth firebrands, [arrows and death] and says: I am only מצחק mocking” ([Bereishit Rabbah 53:11](#)).

SFORNO: Making fun of the big party Avraham had given to mark the weaning of Yitzchok, He claimed that surely Sarah must have become pregnant from Avimelech. The reason he had not made such remarks already at the time when Yitzchok had been born, was because he had only overheard wicked gossip about this at a later stage, and now he repeated what he had heard.

MODERN SCHOLARS: This work, used this way, almost always means sexual impropriety, so perhaps Sarah saw the being sexual and blamed Ishmael. He was also an older brother.

THE AKEDAH Genesis 22

NACHMANIDES

And God tested Avraham: The issue of this test is, in my opinion, shows that a person has the absolute authority to perform an action; one can do what they want, and not do

what one doesn't want. 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 ability to actuality, giving a reward for a good action and not just a reward for a good heart.

RASHI

את בנך. אָמַר לוֹ שְׁנֵי בָנִים יֵשׁ לִי, אָמַר לוֹ אֶת יְחִידְךָ; אָמַר לוֹ זֶה יְחִיד לְאִמּוֹ וְזֶה יְחִיד לְאִמּוֹ,
אָמַר לוֹ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֶּת; אָמַר לוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם אֲנִי אוֹהֵב, אָמַר לוֹ אֶת יֶצְחָק

Gen 22:1 THY SON — Abraham said to God, "I have two sons." "He answered him, "Your only son." Abraham said, "This one is the only son of his mother and the other is the only son of his mother." God then said, "the one you love." Abraham replied, "I love both of them." Whereupon God said "Take Isaac."

העלה AND OFFER HIM (literally, bring him up) — He did not say, "Slay him", because the Holy One, blessed be He, did not desire that he should slay him, but he told him to bring him up to the mountain to prepare him as a burnt offering. So when he had taken him up, God said to him, "Bring him down" (Genesis Rabbah 56:8).

Gen 22:4 ON THE THIRD DAY — Why did God delay and not show it to him at once? So that people should not say, "He confused and confounded him suddenly and bewildered his mind. If, however, he had had time for consideration, he would not have obeyed" (Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 22).

GEN 22:8 יראה לו השה — **God will show the ram...** this means as much as: He will look out for and choose a lamb for Himself, and if there will be no lamb for a burnt offering, then, בני MY SON will be the offering. Although Isaac then understood that he was travelling on to be slain, yet.

וילכו שניהם יחדו. And the two walked on together. בָּלֵב שְׂוֶה **THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER** — with the same ready heart

חיים גורי

Chaim Gouri

ירשה

HERITAGE

האיל בא אחרון.
ולא ידע אברהם כי הוא
משיב לשאלת הילד,
ראשית-אוננו בעת יומו ערב.

The ram came last.
And Abraham didn't know that it
Was the answer to the question of the child,
First of his strength when his days were passing.

גשא ראשו השב.
בראותו כי לא חלם חלום
והמלאך נצב –
גשרה המאכלת מידו.

The old man lifted his head
When he saw that it wasn't a dream
And the angel stood there –
The knife fell from his hand.

הילד שחרר מאסוריו
רצה את גב אביו.

The boy, freed from his bonds
Saw his father's back.

יצחק, כמספר, לא העלה קרבן.
הוא חי ימים רבים,
רצה בשוב, עד אור עיניו בקה.

Isaac, as it is told, was not sacrificed.
He lived a long time,
Saw the good, until light dimmed in his eyes.

אבל את השעה ההיא הוריש לצאצאיו.
הם נולדים
ומאכלת בלבם.

But that hour was given to his descendants.
They are born
With a knife in their hearts.

THE REAL HERO OF THE AKEDAH – Yehuda Amichai

The real hero of The Binding of Isaac was the ram,
who didn't know about the collusion between the others.
He was volunteered to die instead of Isaac.
I want to sing a memorial song about him—
[5] about his curly wool and his human eyes,
about the horns that were so silent on his living head,
and how they made those horns into shofars when he was slaughtered
to sound their battle cries
or to blare out their obscene joy.

[10] I want to remember the last frame
like a photo in an elegant fashion magazine:
the young man tanned and pampered in his jazzy suit
and beside him the angel, dressed for a formal reception
in a long silk gown,
[15] both of them looking with empty eyes
at two empty places,

and behind them, like a colored backdrop, the ram,
caught in the thicket before the slaughter,
the thicket his last friend.

[20] The angel went home.
Isaac went home.
Abraham and God had gone long before.
But the real hero of The Binding of Isaac
is the ram.