

11-18-23 To Roeh Israel Abilene – *Akaidah Yitzhak*, part 3
Torah Portion; Staying in Toldot Gen 25:19 – 29:9 VaYishlach Gen 32:3 – 36:43
Haftarah: Mal 1:1 – 2:7
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Luke 9:23-25

The Akaidat Yitzhak part 3

Central question of this message: Are you going to see the mission through to the end, even if it costs you your life?

Today's Torah portion is Toldot, which means "generations." Its name comes from the second Hebrew word in the passage (and the eighth word in the English translation, below).

Gen 25:19-21

19 Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. 21 And Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.

וַיֵּצֵא:	אֶת־	הוֹלִיד	אַבְרָהָם	אַבְרָהָם	בֶּן־	יִצְחָק	תּוֹלְדֹת	וְאֵלֶּה	19	
Isaac:		begat	Abraham	Abraham's	son:	Isaac,	the generations of	are	And these	
<u>3327</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>3205</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>3327</u>	<u>8435</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>428</u>	
בְּתוּאֵל	בַּת־	רִבְקָה	אֶת־	בְּקִיחָתּוֹ	שָׁנָה	אַרְבָּעִים	בֶּן־	יִצְחָק	וַיְהִי	20
Bethuel	the daughter of	Rebekah		when he took	years	forty	old	Isaac	And was	
<u>1328</u>	<u>1323</u>	<u>7259</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>3947</u>	<u>8141</u>	<u>705</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>3327</u>	<u>1961</u>	
			לִוְיָאֵשָׁה:	הַסְּרִינִי	לָבָן	אֲחֹת	מִכַּדַּן־אַרָּם	הַסְּרִינִי		
			to wife,	the Syrian.	Laban	the sister to	of Padan-aram,	the Syrian		
			<u>802</u> <u>3807a</u>	<u>761</u>	<u>3837</u>	<u>269</u>	<u>6307</u>	<u>761</u>		
וַיַּעֲתֹר	הִוא	עֲקָרָה	כִּי	אִשְׁתּוֹ	לְנִכְחַ	לַיהוָה	יִצְחָק	וַיַּעֲתֹר	21	
and was intreated	she	barren:	was	because	his wife,	for	the Lord	Isaac	And intreated	
<u>6279</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>6135</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>3588</u>	<u>802</u>	<u>5227</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>3327</u>	<u>6279</u>	
				אִשְׁתּוֹ:	רִבְקָה	וַתַּהַר	יְהוָה	לוֹ		
				his wife	Rebekah	and conceived.	the Lord	of him,		
				<u>802</u>	<u>7259</u>	<u>2029</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>3807a</u>		

There are many great lessons in this parasha, especially regarding the birthright issue between Esav and Yacov. Suffice it to say that Yacov did not obtain his birthright outside the will of G-d. It was his birthright as the “selected son” from the very beginning, directly by decree of G-d. Yes, it seems that Rebekah conspired with Yacov to “trick” Yitzhak into conferring the birthright upon Yacov.

Gen 25:23

23 And the Lord said to her,
 "Two nations are in your womb;
 And two peoples shall be separated from your body;

And one people shall be stronger than the other;
And the older shall serve the younger."

But it is clear from the context of the passage that Yitzhak intended to confer (contrary to G-d's direction) upon Esav, and not Yacov. What Rebekah did with the cooperation of Yacov, was to keep Yitzhak from violating G-d's explicit direction for the birthright. So, to call Yacov a "supplanter" is at best a false accusation.

With that meager offering of a brief lesson from today's parasha, I will return to our series currently in progress on the *Akaidah*. We are in the third installment in that series.

So, let's begin where we left off last time, discussing how Yitzhak was described as becoming the *olah* sacrifice, that sacrifice which is completely burned-up as evidence of the complete and unconditional subjection to the will of G-d.

The Olah - An Issue of the Heart

It is said that the *olah* (smoke) of the sacrifice would rise to heaven as a pleasing aroma before G-d's throne. Most certainly G-d is pleased when we bring Him a sacrifice. In doing so, we recognize who we are, and who

G-d is. But much more than that, G-d is looking at the heart. Scripture gives us an insight into G-d's mind on this matter.

Ps 51:10-17

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation [lit. Yeshua] And sustain me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation [lit. Yeshua]; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Before moving on, I wish to address how one should properly read verses 16 and 17. It might be said that G-d is changing His mind on whether we should be bringing a sacrifice to Him.

I do not now wish to spend some of this time addressing the theological issue which I see today regarding the statement that “all the sacrifices have been abrogated” by the singular sacrifice of Yeshua as atonement. That is for another day.

But we can view the passage in the context of the time in which it was written, during which the sacrifices – all the sacrifices – were properly offered to G-d.

The obvious conundrum presented in those two verses in the English-speaking western mind is this: How can G-d not desire that which He has commanded? Did G-d change His mind on something this important, and fail to tell us of that important change?

Once we see what is actually being presented, with a Hebraic mind, it will all make sense.

The English translation of the final verse in the passage also offers a bit of a problem, and I wish to start there. It follows the declaration that a broken heart is what G-d wishes. It is, “You will not despise.”

Again, with the English western-thinking mind, we might closely associate “despise” with the sacrifices, because the contrite heart G-d

won't despise. This suggests that the lesser things – the sacrifices – G-d does despise.

לֵב-	נִשְׁבָּרָה	רוּחַ	אֱלֹהִים	זִבְחֵי	19
a heart,	broken	a spirit:	are	God	The sacrifices of
<u>3820</u>	<u>7665</u>	<u>7307</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>2077</u>
	תִּבְזֶה:	לֹא	אֱלֹהִים	וְנִדְכָּה	נִשְׁבָּר
	thou wilt despise.	not	O God,	and a contrite	broken
	<u>959</u>	<u>3808</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>1794</u>	<u>7665</u>

The Hebrew word translated into English above as “despise” is *tivzeh*. It is derived from the Hebrew root word *bazah*.

OT:959 בָּזָה **bazah** (baw-zaw'); a primitive root; to disesteem:

It might be legitimately translated as “despise” but I believe that word in this context is a bit more severe than is appropriate. I would suggest a bit longer, but more accurate, translation as, “You will not regard as less valuable to You.” So, with this translation in mind, let me rewrite the verses as follows:

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not regard as less valuable to You.”

I hope that helps you see the heart of G-d a bit more clearly.

With that in mind, let's go up a few more verses and analyze that as well. What you see here is a classic example of the Hebraic method of making a point regarding a particular lifestyle choice. It is called "*kal v'homer*." It means "light and heavy." What this Hebraic technique does is to compare two important things, but to emphasize the one which is more important, it minimizes the other very important one to insignificance. This technique shows the supreme importance of the one by this comparison.

When Westerners see this technique in Scripture, we often see a bit of confusion. I am not certain of why that is, but I think it likely comes from two factors. One is that we presume that when we read something in Spirit-inspired Scripture, we believe that the language there is elevated well above us. Secondly, we seem to forget that G-d speaks in our language in a way that we can understand it better, and He uses some of our own linguistic techniques as a tool to reach us at a common level. If those linguistic tools are not widely used in our society at this time, then that doesn't allow us to change the intent of G-d to use that technique for the primary readers of the passage in the time frame that it was delivered.

I have illustrated the concept of *kal v'homer* with a scene from the 1986 movie *Crocodile Dundee*, which not only illustrates the idea, but is memorable as well. Here is a link to that short scene.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSnosk4tWrg>

As western-thinkers it brings a laugh, which also helps in the memory of the event. In the end, western-thinkers use the technique of *kal v'homer* in our daily conversations often, but they don't seem to easily recognize it when it appears in Scripture.

If you are reading Scripture and thinking with the Hebraic mind, you recognize these things immediately, and are led to the bigger picture right away. What the psalmist did in this passage was to illustrate the supreme value of a contrite heart over that of a sacrifice.

Without doing violence to the Scripture, allow me to paraphrase the last few verses with a little bit of Dundee language as, “You want to bring me a sacrifice? A dead animal? *That's not a sacrifice!* A broken and contrite heart, *that is a sacrifice!*”

While we are talking about the primary importance of the heart, I would like to tie the heart to the concept of following G-d.

We know that the proof of the heart is found in the actions that follow that heart, and the Scripture ties that concept directly to the *Akaidah*.

James 2:14-26

14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 18 But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the

works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. 25 And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

But people often seem to find a way to disobey G-d while *appearing to* obey Him. It happened with Saul. And the prophet Samuel rebuked him, using the same theme that King David spoke in the psalm.

1 Sam 15:20-22

20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal." 22 And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt

offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the
fat of rams.

So, now we see the tie-in between the heart of obedience, and the actions
that follow that heart.

Our sage, the Gaon of Vilna (an 18th century genius who lived in
Lithuania), taught that the value of any obedience is measured by the
degree to which it runs contrary to our human nature. I think he is right.

Was it against Abraham's human nature to set out to sacrifice his son? It
would be against mine. But I'm not called to do that.

If you have been called to the service of G-d, you will find that there *are*
things in your life which seem to hold you back from giving Him your
best service. And Satan's whispers just add to those impediments.

Breaking through the boundaries that hold us back requires courage. Erma
Bombeck reminds us, "All of us have moments in our lives that test our
courage. Taking children into a house with a white carpet is one of them."

I want to shift our focus from the various lessons that are learning from the call of Abraham to this “impossible task” to look more closely at how this passage relates more clearly to the Messiah.

And We Shall Return

Gen 22:5

5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."

You noticed that Abraham declares to the young men who have come with him, that they are to stay with the animals, and then said, “...and I and the lad [Yitzhak] will go yonder; **and we** will worship and return to you.”

I have, in a previous message in this series, told you that the sage Rashi has concluded that this statement from Abraham was prophetic, and he knew that he and the lad would return, by some means the L-rd chose.

Please now focus on the word in verse 5 translated “and return” or “and come again.”

וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם:
 and worship, and come again to you,
7812 7725 413

It is pronounced *v'nashuvah*. It's from the Hebrew root *shuv*, שׁוּב which means to “turn back.” Literally, it carries with it the essence of repentance. We use that exact same word in our liturgy, when we return the Torah to the ark. We say “Bring us back to You, Hashem, and we shall return, renew our days as of old.”

As the Torah is placed into the Ark, the congregation recites the following verses:

וּבִנְחָה יֹאמֶר, * שׁוּבָה יְהוָה רַבְבוֹת אֱלֹפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.¹ קוּמָה
 יְהוָה * לְמִנוּחָתָךְ, אֲתָה וְאַרְוֹן עֲזָךְ. כְּהִנִּיךְ יִלְבָּשׁוּ
 צִדֵּק, וְחִסְדֶּיךָ יִרְנְנוּ. בְּעָבוֹר דָּוִד עֲבָדְךָ, אֶל תָּשֶׁב פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחֶךָ.²
 • כִּי לָקַח טוֹב * נָתַתִּי לָכֶם, תּוֹרַתִּי אֶל תַּעֲזֹבוּ.³ ❖ עַץ חַיִּים הִיא
 לְמַחְזִיקִים בָּהּ, וְתִמְכֶּיָּה מֵאֲשֶׁר.⁴ דְּרָכֶיָּה דְרָכֵי נֹעַם, וְכָל
 נְתִיבֶתֶיָּה שְׁלוֹם.⁵ הָשִׁיבֵנוּ * יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְנָשׁוּבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ
 בְּקָדָם.⁶

As the Torah is placed into the Ark, the congregation recites the following verses:

וּבִנְחָה And when it rested he would say,* ‘Return HASHEM to the
 myriad thousands of Israel.’¹ Arise, HASHEM,* to Your resting
 place, You and the Ark of Your strength. Let Your priests be clothed in
 righteousness, and Your devout ones will sing joyously. For the sake of
 David, Your servant, turn not away the face of Your anointed.² For I
 have given you a good teaching,* do not forsake My Torah.³ Chazzan—
 It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and its supporters are
 praiseworthy.⁴ Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are
 peace.⁵ Bring us back* to You, HASHEM, and we shall return, renew our
 days as of old.⁶

Do you see how these two concepts tie together? Abraham tells the lads that he and Yitzhak will *return*. And we express the same desire that as we drift away from G-d, that we will *return* back to Him, and then ask him to renew our days as of old (in other words – make all things new).

The theme of making old things new is the essence of resurrection. The concept of resurrection is not original with the Christian church. It is found woven into the ancient writings of our sages, who found in the *Akaidah Yitzhak* a type of resurrection from the dead.

Rav Yehuda said in Pirkei D'Rrebi Eliezer chapter 30/31,

"When the sword got to his neck Isaac's soul departed. When he heard the sound from between the cherubs [referring to G-d's throne in heaven, which is invoked on earth by the cheruvim on either side of the "mercy seat" – the lid – of the Ark of the Covenant], saying 'Do not lift your hand..., ' his soul returned. He stood on his feet and ... said 'Blessed be thou God who revives the dead.'"

So, it seems that at least one of our sages believed centuries ago that Yitzhak literally died, and was brought back to life right then and there.

And even today the Jewish people recognize this very concept of life from the dead, for it is featured in one of what are called the *Shmonei Esrei* prayers of *shachris*. It is found on page 100-101 in the Ashkenaz Siddur.

101 / **SHACHARIS/WEEKDAY MORNING SERVICE** SHEMONEH ESREI

Between Shemini Atzeres and Pesach add the following.
He makes the wind blow and He makes the rain descend.
[If forgotten, see Laws §70-75.]

He sustains the living with kindness, resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy, supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined, and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust. Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds, and who is comparable to You, O
*King Who causes death and restores life and makes salvation ^{arise} sprout!**

Who is like You, Merciful Father, Who recalls His creatures mercifully for life!
[If forgotten, do not repeat Shemoneh Esrei. See Laws, §61.]

And You are faithful to resuscitate the dead. Blessed are You, HASHEM, Who resuscitates the dead.

During the silent Shemoneh Esrei continue with 'You are holy' p. 102.
During the chazzan's repetition, Kedushah is recited at this point.

There is a wonderful passage written by the author of the letter to the Hebrews which we can see as a teaching on this very concept.

Heb 11:17-19

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." 19 He considered that God is able

to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.

Carry the Wood of the Sacrifice, My Son

As the story of Abraham and Yitzhak progresses, after the ride with the young men and the donkey is finished, there is a short walk to the place called *Moriah*, visible just ahead.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

I believe it is no coincidence that Abraham placed the wood for the sacrifice on the shoulders of Yitzhak. One may justify that by remembering that Abraham is now very old, probably in his 130s, but I think there is greater spiritual significance.

We must not forget that Yeshua was to carry the wood of His sacrifice to the top of a hill as well. He was so badly beaten that He could not do so, and Simon was ordered to carry it for Him (Matthew 27:32).

The clear implication of using this word in this passage is to suggest that the father and his son were not merely walking together, but were walking in perfect unity, “as one”.

The L-rd Will See

And as they are walking, we see recorded in Scripture an odd dialog that we have addressed before, but let’s take another look at another aspect of it today.

Gen 22:7-8

7 And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

What Abraham said, in Hebrew, is worthy of looking at a little more closely.

הֶשֶׁה	לּוֹ	יִרְאֶה-	אֱלֹהִים	אַבְרָהָם	וַיֹּאמֶר ⁸
a lamb	himself	will provide	God	Abraham	And said,
<u>7716</u>	<u>3807a</u>	<u>7200</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>559</u>

The Hebrew word translated as “will provide” is possibly more accurately translated as “he will see”. It’s the Hebrew word *ra’ah*. From the same root as *re’eh*.

OT:7200 רָאָה **ra'ah** (raw-aw'); a primitive root; to see, literally or figuratively (in numerous applications, direct and implied, transitive, intransitive and causative):

So, the passage might be legitimately translated, “G-d will see for Himself the lamb.” It’s not elegant English, but it is wonderful theology because the use of the word “see” ties-in with a series of verses which are imminently prophetic of the Messiah.

Isa 53:10-11

10 But the Lord was pleased
To crush Him [Messiah], putting Him to grief;
If He [Messiah] would render Himself as a guilt offering,
He will see His offspring,

He will prolong His days,
 And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.
 11 As a result of the anguish of His [Messiah's] soul,
He will see it [the sacrifice] and be satisfied;
 By His knowledge the Righteous One,
 My Servant [Yeshua], will justify the many,
 As He will bear their iniquities.

In the Isaiah passage at verse 11, “He will see” is again, *re’eh*... the very same word. I think this is not accidental.

יִשְׁבֹּעַ		וְרָאָה	נַפְשׁוֹ	מֵעֲמָל	11
shall be satisfied:	and	He shall see	his soul,	of the travail of	
<u>7646</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>7200</u>	<u>5315</u>	<u>5999</u>	

Let's return to the passage, and see something else that is important.

Yitzhak Could Have Refused to be the Sacrifice

Gen 22:6-8

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. **So the two of them walked on together.** 7 And Isaac

spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." **So the two of them walked on together.**

The phrase indicating that they “walked on together” appears identical language twice. It is also true in the Hebrew.

Why is this repetition important? We already knew they were walking together. When we see something repeated, we should slow down a bit and look deeper. This repetition is essential to the theology of this passage.

As Abraham and Yitzhak left the two men with the donkey, and “walked on together,” Yitzhak didn’t understand that He was to be the sacrifice. But after the short exchange with Abraham where Yitzhak understood that he was to be the sacrifice (“the sacrifice..... my son.) Yitzhak could have chosen not to go further.

The second use of the phrase emphasizes the fact that Yitzhak had a choice to walk further, and *he chose to do so*. Even with many deep questions, he was still walking in unity with Abraham.

Did Yeshua have a choice to become the sacrifice?

Mark 14:33-36

33 And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. 34 And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." 35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. 36 And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

Yeshua was called to a high mission. But you might be also called to an important mission. As with Him, you will also have the option of turning back, of failing to complete the mission. The larger and more important the mission is, the more that Satan will oppose you.

The faith of Yitzhak was a shadow and precursor to the faith of Yeshua, exhibited as He also was heading up that hill to become the sacrifice. Yeshua urges those who follow Him to have that same kind of active faith.

Luke 9:23-25

23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [pick up the wood of your sacrifice] daily, and follow Me. 24 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

If Yitzhak had chosen to not “walk on together” with Abraham, how would his life have been different? We can only surmise the answer. But would Yitzhak have been the great patriarch if he had turned back? I am confident he could not have. Our patriarchs are known for their courage to do hard things for G-d’s glory. There can be no exceptions. There is no glory in the kingdom for a coward.

Once you are called to accomplish a mission for G-d’s kingdom, then pick up your cross and follow Yeshua to the place He will show you. Don’t turn back. Don’t drop the wood. Don’t bicker with the Father. Persevere, and lay down your life, so that you can find it.