

The Do's And Don'ts of Education

פרשת וירא

The Sefer Hachinuch's commentary on the Mitzvah of blowing Shofar on Yom Kippurim of Yovel (Mitzvah 331), underscores the importance of understanding עקידת יצחק. He writes that the purpose of blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah is to, "Focus our minds on עקידת יצחק, and imagine ourselves expressing our love of Hashem through the same action. Through this our memory will go up in front of Hashem for good, and we will be innocent before Him." It seems that just imagining ourselves participating in an act similar to עקידת יצחק, to our own children, can have such a significant impact on our judgement on Rosh Hashana. Therefore, it behooves us to attempt to gain a deeper insight into the formula used by אברהם ממסירות נפש. This way, we will also be able to attain such lofty levels of אבינו.

The Rabbeinu Bachya writes in this week's Parshah (22:1); "This test was not like any other test, as human nature is unable to imagine the amount of love אברהם אבינו had for his son יצחק. At 100 years old he could not have children, yet he possessed wealth, property

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and honor, which he longed to give to a son. Then after losing hope, he had a son. This love continuously increased and grew through the different stages of his son's development. There is nothing in this world that could overpower אברהם אבינו's love for יצחק. However, despite the fact that his love for יצחק was so intense, אברהם אבינו was able to recognize that it was fitting for his love of Hashem to overpower his love of יצחק, due to his complete and perfect Emunah in Hashem. Through his intense love of Hashem he was able to subordinate his love for his son."

Rabbeinu Bachya is clearly stating the mindset of אברהם אבינו, and the process he went through in this situation, in order to do the רצון השם.

Often we tend to think that אברהם אבינו was able to successfully pass the test of עקידת יצחק because he reached a level of following Hashem's directives without any questions. However, we see from Rabbeinu Bachya that being commanded directly from Hashem was not enough to enable אברהם אבינו to overpower his love for יצחק, and fulfill the רצון השם. He needed to first go through a 2 step process of first having reached complete Emunah in Hashem, in which he came to the full appreciation and realization of the depths of Hashem's goodness and kindness, as well as the purpose of creation. Knowing Hashem is what allowed him to take the second step of intellectually weighing his options, and seeing that it was proper for his love of Hashem to overpower his love for יצחק.

We can glean a powerful lesson from here with regards to influencing our children and students. Merely stating the do's and don'ts are often not enough to enable them to overcome challenges and fulfill the רצון השם. At times it is not sufficient to just say, "Hashem said to do it." It is critical that we also educate them about who Hashem is, and the extent of his חסד. Only through getting to know and appreciate Hashem will they be able to make the calculations that are necessary to fulfill the רצון השם. If this was true regarding אברהם אבינו how much more so does this apply to us.

BASED ON THE WEEKLY SHMUSS GIVEN BY HARAV SHAYA COHEN, ROSH HAYESHIVA ZICHRON ARYEH

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח
לעילוי נשמת הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר
לעילוי נשמת רפאל חיים דוב בן ריסא שושנה
לרפואה שלמה יהושע דוד בן אלטא יענטא