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Sacrifice of the Mind

By: Rabbi Michel Levitansky (Originally Published 2006)

When we go through situations where our faith in Hashem is put to the test, this week's Parsha tells us how we should handle ourselves.

Our Patriarch Avrohom was promised that the future of the whole Jewish nation would lie in his beloved son, Yitzchok (21:11). Later, however, Hashem commands Avrohom to take Yitzchok and offer him in the land of Moriah as an offering (22:2).

This is a blatant contradiction that could have caused Avrohom to question Hashem.

According to Rabbi Shimon Schwab (1908-1993), the esteemed rav of Khal Adath Yeshurun in Washington Heights, NY, there were two possible ways that Avrohom could have dealt with this.

He could have thought and thought how to understand Hashem's statement. Then, when his brain couldn't come up with a plausible explanation, he could have questioned Hashem's decree.

Or, after he realized he couldn't fathom the ways of Hashem, he could have accepted the Will of Hashem even without understanding it.

Avrohom chose the latter. Even though Hashem's command contradicted Avrohom's understanding, Avrohom sacrificed his mind to the Will of Hashem, just as one would forfeit his life rather than violate the three cardinal sins of idol worship, murder, and certain forbidden relationships.

This way of conducting ourselves can help us at any time where we feel that the Torah, which is Hashem's Will, seems to contradict some basic truth.

It may be a basic instinct to want to feel in control. However, this is a lesson we can learn from the test of Akeidas Yitzchok, the Binding of Isaac. There is a higher power who is all-knowing, and we must defer to His Will.

That is how we can keep our faith in even the darkest of times.

Alumni Focus

Rabbi Michel Levitansky



Rabbi Levitansky, teaching in Kollel, 2005

2004-2010

Years as a Denver
Kollel Scholar



Rabbi Levitansky, teaching in 2023

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