

Sources for Podcast on Vayera

Nechama Goldman Barash

(For more sources mentioned in the podcast, please see Dr. Aaron Koller's excellent analysis *Abraham Passes the Test of the Akedah But Fails as a Father at thetorah.com*)

GENESIS CHAPTER 22

1 Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, "Abraham," and he answered, "Here I am."

2 And He said, "Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you."

3 So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him.

4. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar.

5. Then Abraham said to his servants, "You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you."

6. Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together.

7. Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "Yes, my son." And he said, "Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?"

8. And Abraham said, "God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

9. They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

10. And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son.

11. Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am."

12. And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me."

13. When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.

14. And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, "On the mount of the LORD there is vision."

15. The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said,

16. “By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one,

17. I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore;

18. and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command.”

19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

20 And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying: 'Behold, Milcah, she also hath borne children unto thy brother Nahor: 21 Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram; 22 and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.' 23 And Bethuel begot Rebekah; these eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bore Tehah, and Gaham, and Tahash, and Maacah.

<p>רש"י בראשית כב:ח יראה לו השם. כלומר יראה ויבחר לו השם, ואם אין שם, לעולה בני. ואף על פי שהבין יצחק שהוא הזלך להשחט, וילכו שניהם יחדו. בלב שנה:</p>	<p>Rashi Genesis 22:8</p> <p>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. The two walked on together. With one heart.</p>
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The two stories are strikingly parallel. See chapter 21 for the full story of the sending away of Ishmael.

In both,

- God tells Abraham that he needs to sacrifice his son – banish in the case of Ishmael, kill in the case of Isaac (21:12-13; 22:1-2).
- In both stories Abraham “wakes up early in the morning” (וישכם אברהם בבקר) and takes his supplies (21:14; 22:3).

- The end draws near: Ishmael, about to die of thirst, is left under a bush by his mother (21:15-16), and Isaac is about to be slaughtered by his father (21:9-10).
- At the last minute, an angel appears to offer a reprieve (21:17, 22:11–12).
- The appearance of the angel is followed by blessings for the future (21:18; 22:16-17).
- The salvation is tied to the parent seeing something new – a well of water in the case of Hagar (21:19) and a ram in the case of Abraham (22:13).
- Each end with notices related to the children’s marriages (21:21; 22:20-24). In the case of Ishmael Hagar finds him a wife in Egypt. In the case of Isaac, the birth of Rebecca is the foreshadowing of his future wife.

Piyyuṭ [liturgical poem] by R. El’azar b. R. Qillir
(c. 500 CE, Byzantine Eretz Israel)

עָלַם אֲשֶׁר חֲנַנְתּוּ בְּכֹלֹת פָּחוּ
 עֲקָדוֹ עַל עֲצֵי מִזְבֵּחוֹ
 עֲצוֹר שְׁלוֹשָׁה יָמִים עָשׂ אֶפְרוּחוֹ
 עָרַב וְנִרְצָה נִיחֹחוֹ
 עָצָם וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ הַפִּיחַ רִיחוֹ
 עֲנִיין כְּרַחֵם אֵב עַל בְּנִים בְּשִׁכְחוֹ
 עֲטִיפַת תַּחֲנֻנָּה הִיָּה לוֹ לַעֲרוֹךְ בְּשִׁיחוֹ
 עֲתָה יְדַעְתִּי שִׁימְעֵתוֹ לִשְׂבַחוֹ
 עוֹשֵׂה אֶרֶץ בְּכָחוֹ.

(God speaks in this part of the piyyut)

Turning to the end of twenty he saw
 Indeed, to circumcise him I rejoiced and exulted
 He burnt idols, and I gazed upon him
 He abandoned his family to enter my fold.
(But the Torah—referred to here as אָמוֹן, “the faithful one”—replies)
 The young man with whom you graced him when
 his strength was spent
 He bound on the wood of the altar
 Arrested for three days, he offered his chick
 It was pleasant, and his offering was accepted
 He became great, and his reputation spread
 throughout the land.
 But he forgot how a father is supposed to have
 mercy on children
 A prayer or plea he should have offered!
 “Now I know,” you said to him, to praise him,
 The One who made the land with his strength.

Ps 103:13 As a father has mercy on children, so does the Lord have mercy on those who fear Him.

תהלים קג:יג כְּרַחֵם אָב עַל בְּנָיִם יְיָ הַנְּהוּ עַל יְרֵאָיו.

The Parable of the Old Man and the Young

Wilfred Owens

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
and builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretchèd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.