

## 1. משנה מסכת תענית פרק ב

סדר תעניות כיצד... עמדו בתפלה מורידין לפני התיבה זקן ורגיל ויש לו בנים וביתו ריקם כדי שיהא לבו שלם בתפלה ואומר לפניו עשרים וארבעה ברכות שמונה עשרה שבכל יום ומוסיף עליהן עוד שש: ואלו הן זכרונות ושופרות... על הראשונה הוא אומר מי שענה את אברהם בהר המוריה הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' גואל ישראל על השניה הוא אומר מי שענה את אבותינו על ים סוף הוא יענה אתכם וישמע קול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' זוכר הנשכחות על השלישית הוא אומר מי שענה את יהושע בגלגל הוא יענה אתכם וישמע קול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' שומע תרועה על הרביעית הוא אומר מי שענה את שמואל במצפה הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' שומע צעקה על החמישית הוא אומר מי שענה את אליהו בהר הכרמל הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' שומע תפלה על הששית הוא אומר מי שענה את יונה ממעי הדגה הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' העונה בעת צרה על השביעית הוא אומר מי שענה את דוד ואת שלמה בנו בירושלם הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' המרחם על הארץ:

What is the order of the [prayer service of the] fast-days? ... They stand to pray. We bring in front of the ark an elderly man who regularly [function as chazzan], who has children, and whose house is empty, so that his heart may be entirely [devoted] to his prayer, and he says before them twenty-four blessings: the eighteen that are [said] every day, and he adds upon them another six. These [extra blessings] are as follows: (1) [The blessing of] Remembrances, (2) [The blessing of] Shofars... Upon the first blessing he shall say [in conclusion], "He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, may He answer you, and listen to your cry on this day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel!" Upon the second he shall say, "He who answered our ancestors on the Red Sea, may He answer you, and listen to your cry on this day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who remembers the [things] forgotten [by man]!" Upon the third he shall say, "He who answered Yehoshua in Gilgal, may He answer you, and listen this day to your cry. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who deigns to listen to the sound of the shofar!" Upon the fourth he shall say, "He who answered Samuel in Mizpah, may He answer you, and listen to your cry on this day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hearkens to [our] cry!" Upon the fifth he shall say, "He who answered Elijah on Mount Carmel, may He answer you, and listen to your cry on this day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hearkens to prayer!" Upon the sixth he shall say, "He who answered Jonah in the entrails of the fish, may He answer you, and listen to your cry on this day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who answers in the time of distress!" Upon the seventh he shall say, "He who answered David, and his son Solomon, in Jerusalem, may He answer you, and listen to your cry on this day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who has compassion on the earth!"

## 2. ילקוט שמעוני תורה פרשת וירא רמז קא

וישם אותו על המזבח [כ"ב, ט] עיני אברהם בעיני יצחק ועיני יצחק בשמי שמים והיו דמעות מנשרות ונופלות מעיני אברהם עד שהיתה קומתו משוטטת בדמעות א"ל בני הואיל והתחלת על רביעית דמדך יוצרך יזמין לך קרבן אחר תחתיך, באותה שעה פער פיו בבכיה וגעה געיה גדולה והיו עיניו מרופפות וצופות לשכינה והרים קולו ואמר אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי עזרי מעם ה' עושה שמים וארץ

"He placed him upon the altar" – Avraham's eyes gazing into Yitzchak's eyes, and Yitzchak's eyes gazing towards heaven. And tears fell from Avraham's eyes until he was swimming in tears. He said to him, "My son – since you have already expressed your readiness to relinquish your blood, your Creator will find a different sacrifice in your place."

At that moment his mouth opened with a great weeping and he sighed a great sigh, and his eyes wandered and looked for the Shekhina. He lifted his voice and said, "I shall lift my eyes towards the hills, from whence my aid shall come. My aid is from God, Maker of the heavens and the earth."

## 3. "Purify our Hearts to Serve You in Truth" Adapted from Harav Yehuda Amital

Immediately we ask: was it really Avraham's prayer that brought about the turning point in the akeida? Do we not believe that from the beginning God's intention was merely to test him, that there was never the slightest possibility that Avraham would sacrifice his son?

However, the Men of the Great Assembly, who composed the above prayer, knew that this story represents not only the realization of the Divine will, but also the response to Avraham's HUMAN cry. Even had the Divine plan not been to prevent the slaying, Yitzchak would have been saved from the decree of the akeida by virtue of Avraham's prayer. In contrast to the story of Sedom, where Avraham "argues" with God, the emphasis here is on Avraham's PRAYER. And if there existed no tradition in this regard, our Sages would not emphasize it. Avraham instituted a genuine "prayer service" here – for the moment, and for all generations....

Despite God's instruction to bind his son, Avraham could not resign himself to this fate; he prayed for his son. This midrash reveals to us Avraham's ambivalent attitude towards the command. On the one hand, he was a loyal servant, eager to fulfill his Creator's word; on the other hand, he was a loving and compassionate father who could not overcome his emotions, and prayed for his son, pleading for his life to be spared.... Avraham's humanity and humaneness, climaxing in the story of Sedom, are not absent from the parasha of the akeida.

Truth is the crux of our Rosh Ha-shana prayers. On this day we emphasize this quality over and over: "For You are a God of truth, and Your word is true and stands forever;" "purify our hearts to serve You in truth."

It is clear, then, why it is specifically the shofar that we sound on this day. The call of the shofar is a genuine sound – a simple sound, a cry emanating from the depths of the human heart. ... On Rosh Ha-shana we pray that our prayers will not be uttered from our mouths outwards, as empty utterances, but rather as expressions of an inner truth, emerging from the innermost recesses of our heart.

#### 4. Divrei Hashkafa, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (my translation)

When a man and G-d happen upon the same inn, his is called on by G-d for personal sacrifice. This expresses itself with his primitive inclinations, the breaking of the will... Sacrifice your sacrifice! That is the central command given to the religious person... G-d says to Avraham: I demand of you the greatest sacrifice. I want your son, who is your only one, your beloved. Don't fool yourself, that after you listen to my voice and bring up your son as a sacrifice I will give you another son in the place of Yitzchak. When Yitzchak is slayed on the alter, you will remain forlorn and childless. You shall have no son born to you. Your existence will be folded into loneliness like no other. I want your only one for who there is no replacement... Your life will become a long a chain of torture for the soul. Nevertheless, I demand this sacrifice.

#### 5. יונה פרק ב, ב-י

(ב) ויתפלל יונה אל־יקוק אלהיו מפעו הדגה : (ג) ולאמר קראתי מצרה לי אל־יקוק ויעניי מבטן שאול שועתי שמעתי קולי : (ד) ותשליכני מצולה בלבב ימים ונהר וסבבני כל־משבריך וגליד עלי עברו : (ה) ואני אמרתי נגרשתי מנגד עיניך אך אוסיף להביט אלהיכל קדשך : (ו) אפפוני מים עד־נפש תהום וסבבני סוף חבוש לראשי : (ז) לקצבי הרים לרדתי הארץ ברתייה בעד־י לעולם ותעל משחת חני קוק אלהי : (ח) בהתעטף עלי נפשי את־יקוק זכרתי ותבוא אליך תפילתי אלהיכל קדשך : (ט) משמרים הבלי־שוא חסדם יעזבו : (י) ואני בקול תודה אֶזְבַּח־לְךָ אִשָּׁר נִדְרֹתַי אֲשַׁלְמָה ישועתה ליקוק : ס

Yonah prayed to Hashem his God from the entrails of the fish. He said: I have cried from trouble to me toward Hashem; He responded; from the belly of Sheol I pleaded; You heard my voice. You threw me מצולה in the heart(s) of seas, and a river surrounded me; all Your breakers and waves upon me passed. But I had said: I was chased away from opposite Your eyes; instead I will continue to gaze toward Your Holy sanctuary. Water overlapped me until it endangered my soul, the deep surrounded me; reeds saddled my head. To the ends of hills I descended; the land barred my way for eternity; but You caused my life to ascend from shachat, Hashem my G-d. When my soul went faint on me, It was Hashem that I remembered, and my prayer came to you, to your holy palace, Those who stand watch for meaningless hot air; they will abandon the objects of their chesed. But I, with a sound of gratitude I will sacrifice to you; that which I swore I will repay. Salvation belongs to G-d!"

#### 6. "So long" vs. "Thanks for all the fish" ; A New Reading of Sefer Yonah By Aryeh Klapper

The fish has two meanings. On the one hand, it tells Yonah that attempted escape is futile, that he cannot die and thereby avoid confronting the paradox of deriving all value from G-d but rejecting G-d's values; the cuneiform symbol for Nineveh was a fish. On the other hand, it tells Yonah that G-d values Yonah's speech. G-d says to him: I will maintain a relationship with you even when we disagree, and I will listen to and consider your opinion; why else would I bother to rescue you from drowning? Disagreement does not lead to execution or even excommunication, but rather to dialogue. So Yonah is given a real option – he can argue with G-d. Yonah accepts, but he understands what acceptance implies. To engage in a decision process voluntarily initiated by a party that could act unilaterally, and wish that party bound by the outcome, means that one must genuinely accept the outcome of that process. G-d's only motive for listening to human beings, for giving human beings the chance to change His mind, is His desire for their willing obedience. So Yonah recognizes that if he cannot convince G-d, he must obey Him

#### 7. מלכים א פרק יט : י

וַיֹּאמֶר קָנָא קָנָאתִי לִיקוּקָא אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת כִּי־עָזְבוּ בְרִיתְךָ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מִזְבְּחֹתֶיךָ הָרְסוּ וְאֶת־נְבִיאֶיךָ הָרְגוּ בַּחֶרֶב וְאֹתָר אֲנִי לְבַדִּי וַיִּבְקְשׁוּ אֶת־נַפְשִׁי לַחֲתֹתָהּ :

He replied, "I am moved by zeal for the LORD, the God of Hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and put Your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they are out to take my life."

#### 8. שמות פרק יד, טו

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקוּק אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מֵהִתְצַעַק אֵלַי דְּבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּסְעוּ :

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward.

#### 9. רש"י שמות פרק יד

למדנו שהיה משה עומד ומתפלל, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא לא עת עתה להאריך בתפלה שישראל נתונים בצרה.. דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו - אין להם אלא ליסע שאין הים עומד בפניהם, כדאי זכות אבותיהם והם והאמונה שהאמינו בי ויצאו, לקרוע להם הים:

This teaches us that Moses stood in prayer. Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "It is no time now to pray at length, when Israel is placed in trouble... SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY JOURNEY ONWARDS — There is nothing for them to do but to journey on, for the sea will not stand in their way: their ancestors' merits and their own, and the faith that they placed in Me so that they left Egypt will suffice to divide the sea for them.