

# א ביסל תורה!

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י"ד חשוון תשפ"ה · וירא

## Why Does אברהם Argue With 'ה?

By Laila Fenton '27

אברהם is a rollercoaster of events, from שרה being promised a child, to 'ה declaring the destruction of סדם, to אברהם buying his grave and so on, but the focus of this דבר תורה is going to be near the beginning of the פרשה, when אברהם is trying "reason" with 'ה about סדם.

There are many opinions about אברהם's conversation with 'ה and how it sounds like אברהם is objecting or arguing against 'ה. According to רש"י's explanation (בראשית י"ח:כ"א) of אברהם's "argument," 'ה says that the city of סדם has sinned so greatly that if they don't unanimously fix their ways, "כלה" "an end I will make of them." Then אברהם comes forward to 'ה but the word used in the פסוק is "ויגש" (בראשית י"ח:כ"ג) "to come near" is usually used in תנ"ך to allude to approaching in battle. Here, אברהם is stepping up to 'ה in protest and arguing with Him. This is the beginning of the debate between אברהם and 'ה where they go back and forth, compromising the number of "righteous people" it would take to spare סדם and save it from destruction. אברהם argues it down from 50 people to 45 people, to 30, to 25, and so on...

But my question isn't "Why is אברהם doing the wrong thing by arguing with 'ה?" My question is why אברהם decides to argue with 'ה only now? Looking back at פרשת לך לך, in which אברהם is starting to be put through a set of ten challenges so difficult and so important, that each one imprints individually into our spiritual genes and plays a key part in our lives as

Jews today. The tests evaluated his loyalty, dedication, and commitment to 'ה by affecting his life in a uniquely challenging way. The most difficult, and final, test was the "עקדת יצחק". Here, אברהם was asked to sacrifice his own son to prove himself to 'ה, and without hesitation, אברהם committed to do it. Throughout all of these ten increasingly difficult and personal tests, אברהם did not complain or refuse once, he followed 'ה indefinitely and carried out the tests with blind faith. However, when the matter is no longer personal to אברהם but affects others, he stands up in protest and opposition. He wouldn't dare argue with 'ה when his own son was on the line but when it is to save strangers, he argues on 'ה's word.

I believe that along with all the other ways אברהם's actions set the standard and mold for Jewish life today, this example demonstrates the two collective assets of a Jew. Someone's natural morality, and תורה morality. When אברהם was going with his natural instinct, he followed 'ה's orders without a second thought. Right away, he did what 'ה tells him to do. But when אברהם's morality was based on the Ultimate Truth, the תורה, his desire was for people to learn, to get closer to 'ה, to be positively influenced, and to grow. Rav Moshe Feinstein says that this morality was such a critical part of אברהם's argument to have his core group of fifty, forty-five, forty, come all the way down to the absolute minimum – ten. אברהם believed that "a single ray of light can deflect much darkness."

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## What We Learn From יצחק's Faith

By Nadav Leibowitz '27

At the end of this week's פרשה ה', אברהם tests by commanding him to sacrifice his son, יצחק. While this test only required אברהם to go and offer his son, אברהם decided to go the extra mile and wake up early, rushing to fulfill ה' command. While אברהם has an incredible desire to fulfill ה' command it is the focus of many מפרשים. Another key component of the עקידה is יצחק's faith. Although יצחק might have intellectually grasped what was occurring, he did not resist. He trusted in ה' plan, even though he couldn't have understood its meaning and purpose.

The רד"ק explains (בראשית כ"א:ז) that יצחק's acceptance didn't involve passivity, but rather the active decision to have faith. When יצחק finds out that he is going to be sacrificed, he does not run away but continues to walk with אברהם. We learn from this that true trust involves allowing ourselves to lose some control and have ה' take over, especially during tough times. יצחק instills in us the courage to trust ה' even when we cannot perceive the bigger picture. רד"ק then states (on the next פסוק) that יצחק told אברהם to tie him down so that אברהם could slaughter him correctly. At this point, יצחק shows that he only cares that אברהם completes his task to ה'. This shows us that יצחק would do anything so that another can succeed. He loves ה' and his father so much that he would allow himself to be sacrificed for them.

רד"ק's point (בראשית כ"א:ט) furthered by saying יצחק wanted אברהם to do fulfill ה' command perfectly. The way to sacrifice an animal perfectly, or in this case יצחק, is if the offering is not struggling. By asking to be tied down יצחק gets rid of any possibility that אברהם would accidentally injure him in a place not in the neck area.

In the end, יצחק's role in the עקידה is a model of true אמונה. The fact that he was willing and ready to trust ה' at such a hard moment reminds us that faith is an active choice. We must actively have faith that everything is in ה' hands. May we find the strength to approach life's challenges with the very same trust and courage.



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