



THE MESSAGE OF THE DOUBLE LANGUAGE

Izzy Kavan (18)

Parshas Vayeira contains the famous story of Akeidas Yitzchak, where Avraham is challenged with the command to bring his son as an offering before Hashem and then is told at the last second not to do so. Just as Avraham lifts his knife, an angel calls out to him saying “Avraham, Avraham! Do not send forth your hand at the lad (Bereishis 22:11-12).” Why is Avraham’s name called twice, especially considering that earlier in this story Hashem calls to Avraham (Bereishis 22:1) and only says his name once? Rashi quotes the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 56:7) which suggests that using a double language when calling someone is “*derech chibah*,” a way of showing love. If so, then why didn’t Hashem call out to Avraham by using a double language? Additionally, why doesn’t Hashem use this double language to show his love for other people throughout Tanach?

The Kli Yakar answers the first question by saying that only after passing this test was Hashem confident enough in Avraham that He could fully trust and show His love for him. The Kli Yakar also offers another explanation, saying that Avraham was so engrossed in his performance of Hashem’s commandment by the Akeidah that he didn’t pay attention to the first time Hashem said his name. Being so involved in an activity that his name had to be called twice shows how much Avraham was willing to perform whatever task Hashem asked of him. We can learn from here the ideal attitude that we should have towards performing *mitzvos*. Avraham wanted to do the *mitzvah* as quickly as possible so that nothing would distract him and prevent him from fulfilling his obligation.

Referring back to the question asked earlier regarding why Hashem didn’t call out with doubled language to other people, Hashem did in fact call out to three other people in Tanach by repeating their names. When Yaakov was hesitant to descend down to Egypt with his family, Hashem reassured Yaakov by calling out to him with a double language and saying that he shouldn’t be afraid because He would be with him (Bereishis 46:2). Moshe was called out to with a double language by the incident of the burning bush (Shemos 3:4). In that case, Moshe would be told about how he was destined to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt. Finally, Shmuel was given the task of telling his mentor and father-like figure Eli, of the curse that would be brought upon his family and Hashem called out to Shmuel with the same double language (Shmuel I 3:11).

What do these four people have in common that would provoke Hashem to call out to them by repeating their names twice? The answer may lie in the same Midrash quoted earlier, which contained the opinion of Rabbi Chiya that double language is *derech chiba*. The other opinion in that *midrash* is that of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov, who explains that each time Hashem repeats someone’s name, it is a message to future generations. Each incident, whether by Avraham, Yaakov, Moshe, or Shmuel, was a situation where Hashem was telling the person that He would be with as they underwent their particular *nisyonos*. The double language comes to teach us that Hashem will be with us throughout whatever challenges we may face. Let us take this inspiring message of the double language and always acknowledge Hashem’s presence in our lives.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AHAVAS HASHEM AND YIRAS HASHEM

Yehuda Snow ('19)

In Parshas Vayeira Avraham is commanded by Hashem to take his beloved son, Yitzchak, and go to Yerushalayim to bring him as a sacrificial offering. When Hashem is commanding Avraham to bring Yitzchak as a sacrifice Hashem says:

קח נא את בְּנֶךְ אֶת יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֶּתָּ אֶת יִצְחָק וְלָךְ לְךָ אֶל
אֶרֶץ הַמִּרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר
אֵלֶיךָ:

"Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchak, and go to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you." However, if we look closely at the story, we see that Hashem never commanded Avraham to bring wood or a knife to sacrifice Yitzchak; nevertheless, Avraham decides to bring a knife and wood to sacrifice Yitzchak because he believes that this is the *ratzon Hashem*.

This story can be contrasted with the story in Maseches Gittin about Marta Bas Baitus. The Gemara in Gittin 56a relates that when Yerushalayim was under siege and low on food supplies, a wealthy woman named Marta Bas Baitus sent out her servant to get food for her. First she told her servant to get fine flour, and he came back to tell her that there was no fine flour left, but there was still lower quality flour left over in the market-place. Marta then told her servant to get that lower quality flour, but again her servant came back empty handed because by that time there was only an even lower quality flour still left in the marketplace. This happened again and again until there was no food left in the market place. In contrast to Avraham who realized the *ratzon Hashem* was for him to take along the supplies that would enable him to sacrifice Yitzchak, Marta's slave failed to realize that when Marta said she wanted fine flour, Marta meant that she wanted the best food available and not just fine flour. I think that the reason for this difference is because Avraham served Hashem out of fear and love, but Marta's servant only served Marta out of fear. If somebody serves their master out of fear with no love

involved they will only be able to follow orders. However, if someone serves their master with fear and love, they will be able to do exactly what their master tells them without asking questions, while also sometimes adding on what they understand that their master truly wants, like Avraham Avinu.

It is an amazing thing that one needs two contradicting feelings that are in balance with each other in order to act on one commandment. The Rambam explains that in order to achieve Ahavas Hashem and Yiras Hashem one should contemplate Hashem's wondrous deeds. When a person first does this he will come to love Hashem, and when he continues thinking about this he will recoil in awe and fear because he is so lowly compared to Hashem. We see how even though these feelings sort of contradict each other, we still have to make them work together even when performing one simple commandment. From here we see what Hashem expects from us and, by definition, what we are able to do. May we be *zoche* to have the appropriate blend of Ahavas and Yiras Hashem and keep all of His *mitzvos* at the highest level.

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