

And Avraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a ram afterwards caught in the thicket by his horns . . . and he took the ram and brought him up for a burnt-offering instead of his son. (22:13)

The *Midrash* states that Avraham saw that the horns of the ram always became entangled in the bushes. The ram became entangled in one shrub and freed itself, only to immediately be caught in another shrub. Noting this phenomenon, Hashem told Avraham, "*Similarly your children will be ensnared and trapped by one exile after another. They will go from Bavel, to Media, onto Greece, and lastly to Rome. In the end they will finally be redeemed by the Shofar sound of this ram's horn.*" This *Midrash* seems enigmatic. Why would Hashem choose this moment to tell Avraham the bad news that his descendants will go from one exile to another? Should Avraham not be given the opportunity to return his equilibrium after completing his tenth and most demanding trial?

Rabbi Tz. Rabinowitz z.t.l. explains this *Midrash* homiletically. Hashem's tidings to Avraham were actually good news. Although Avraham's descendants will be subjected to one exile after another, they will successfully withstand the trials, remaining resolute in their belief in Hashem. The ram's horn symbolizes *Torah* and *mitzvos*. *Bnei Yisrael* will not remove their horns. Just as the ensnared ram could easily have broken off its horns and escaped from the brush, so, too, could Avraham's descendants break away from *Torah* study and *mitzvah* performance in order to alleviate all of the hardships associated with *galus*, exile.

Klal Yisrael has demonstrated its devotion to Hashem by remaining entangled in *galus*, anchored by the "horns" of *Torah* study and *mitzvah* performance. Thus, they will merit to be redeemed with the *Shofar*, rams horn. What greater *nachas* could Hashem give to the man who was about to perform the supreme sacrifice than to notify him of his descendants' willingness to follow in his footsteps? Truly, Hashem brought encouraging news to Avraham.