

## “And they stood up and went together.” (22:19)

The Torah uses the phrase *vayeilchu yachdav*, they went together, three times in regard to the *Akeidah*. The first time, when Avraham left his home together with Yitzchak on the way to the *Akeidah*, the Torah writes that “they walked together” (22:6). *Rashi* explains that “together” means that Avraham, who was acutely aware of his mission to slaughter his only son, went with the same good will and joy as Yitzchak, who knew nothing of Hashem’s command. The second time the Torah writes this phrase it is after Avraham had hinted to Yitzchak that he would be the sacrifice. Yet, Yitzchak accepted Hashem’s command in such a manner that he continued “walking together” with Avraham, as one person with one sentiment (v.8). The third time seems problematic, since it refers to Avraham and Yitzchak returning from the *Akeidah* together with his two lads, Yishmael and Eliezer (v.19). How are we to understand this “togetherness”?

*Horav Aharon Kotler, z.l.*, explains that Eliezer and Yishmael were unaware of the heightened spiritual experience which they had missed, having no clue to what had transpired. Likewise, Avraham and Yitzchak, who played the leading roles in this drama, left the *Akeidah* without any feeling of haughtiness after having experienced this seminal event. Probably the best word that comes to mind is: equanimity. They acted as they were supposed to act. In no way did they feel that they deserved any special round of applause or unusual commendation. They did not bask in assumed glory. It was not a deed performed beyond the call of duty. It is for this very purpose that they were created. They were Jews, and a Jew follows Hashem’s command – unequivocally, with equanimity, because that is what a Jew is supposed to do. To put it in simple terms: a musician makes music; a physician heals; a teacher instructs; a Jew follows Hashem’s command.